

EMERGING ORDERS IN THE SUDANS

EDITED BY
Sandra Calkins, Enrico Ille
and Richard Rottenburg



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Emerging Orders in the Sudans

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Table of Contents

Preface	v
About the Authors	ix
List of Acronyms	xiii
 Emergence and Contestation of Orders in the Sudans <i>Sandra Calkins, Enrico Ille & Richard Rottenburg</i>	 1
 Part 1: Borders and Boundaries	
 1. Rethinking the Role of Historiography in Sudan at a Time of Crisis: Deconstructing and Reconstructing ‘Sudanese History’ <i>Yoshiko Kurita</i>	 25
 2. The Long History of Conflict, Integration and Changing Alliances on the Darfur/Chad Border <i>Andrea Behrends</i>	 39
 3. Whose Land? Disentangling Border Claims in Sudan <i>Douglas H. Johnson</i>	 69
 4. Identifying the South Sudanese: Registration for the January 2011 Referendum and Defining a New Nationality <i>Nicki Kindersley</i>	 79
 5. The Order of Iconicity and the Mutability of ‘the Moro Language’ <i>Siri Lamoureaux</i>	 95

Part 2: Production and Distribution

6. Competing Forms of Land Use and Incompatible Identifications of Who Is to Benefit from Policies in the South of the North: Pastoralists, Agro-Industry and Farmers in the Blue Nile Region
Günther Schlee 121
7. Small-scale Farming in Southern Gedaref State, East Sudan
Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem 139
8. Gifts, Guns and *Govvermen*: South Sudan and its Southeast
Immo Eulenberger 153
9. Negotiating Distributive Orders in Rural Sudan: Justification and Critique of Charitable Gifts
Sandra Calkins 197

Part 3: Organisation and Representation

10. Greedy Donors? Uncertainty and the Organisation of Seed Distribution in the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan
Enrico Ille 221
11. Institutionalisation and Regulation of Medical Kits in an Emergency Situation in the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan
Mariam Sharif 241
12. 'Popular Consultation' as a Mechanism for Peaceful Social Order in the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan?
Guma Kunda Komey 251
13. How DDR Shifted its Face in South Sudan
Timm Sureau 271

Preface

This book results from two international workshops, held at the University of Khartoum in October 2009 and October 2011. The workshops were organised in the context of a large multidisciplinary research programme financed by the German Research Foundation: the Collaborative Research Centre 586 'Difference and Integration' at the universities of Halle-Wittenberg and Leipzig (2001-2012).¹ Two projects in the programme's last phase (2008-2012) dealt with Sudan, and this volume springs from of the editors' fruitful collaboration in these projects.

The University of Khartoum, the University of Juba and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle cooperated in organising the two workshops. They brought together scholars and students from Sudan and Germany, but also from the universities of Durham (U.K.), Bergen (Norway), Chiba (Japan), Tokyo (Japan), Uppsala (Sweden), and Bard College (USA).

The workshop in 2009 was entitled 'Pastoral Livelihoods, Markets and Mobility: Emerging Orders in Sudan'.² It investigated if and how pastoral societies were increasingly shaped by forces and dynamics that caused local territorialities to materialise as sites of global contestations. The contributions to the workshop pointed out that in Sudan such processes have indeed fundamentally transformed pastoral livelihood systems, but that these are not limited to recent neo-liberal restructuring. These processes no longer just involve imperial powers or the state, but include international financial agencies, the development industry and UN organisations. Present-day Sudan then is formed by interventions in different phases and perpetual societal reconfigurations.

It was suggested that these processes manifest themselves in the fragmented and contested territories that pastoral societies inhabit. In their course, new economic exchanges (e.g., new forms of entrepre-

¹ More information on <http://www.nomadsed.de/en/home/index.html>, accessed 22 August 2014.

² More information on <http://www.nomadsed.de/en/events/review/symposia/newsdetails/workshopbr-pastoral-livelihoods-markets-and-mobility-emerging-orders-in-sudan/index.html>, accessed 22 August 2014.

neurship), new patterns of mobility and participation, and contested livelihood strategies (e.g., autochthonous land claims) are unfolding and fostering new orders of domination and legitimation.

The workshop in 2011 assumed a wider perspective. It asked whether the above-mentioned societal reconfigurations could be observed throughout Sudan. With the title 'Institutionalization and Regulation: Emerging Orders in Sudan After the Referendum',³ the organisers sought to maintain that the postcolonial history of Sudan can be read as a continuous struggle to find appropriate institutional orders for this vast and heterogeneous country. From this perspective the main challenges have been to reconcile the many different local orders (starting from the colonial legacy of 'indirect rule'), especially in relation to the state, to transform them through processes of modernisation and nation building, to overcome the inherited north-south dichotomy, and to relate Sudanese institutional orders to contradictory international arrangements and conventions.

The discussions in the workshop focussed on emerging institutional orders, including norms, values, significations and technologies that regulate redistribution and solidarity among kin and neighbours, gender relations, life courses, access to land, markets and employment, access to cooperatives, interest groups or rotating savings and credit associations, new spatial orders, ethnic boundaries, new material and technological orders, and similar issues. Intermediate institutions between the state and the people, such as civil society organizations, traditional legal orders, education and elite formation, were of particular interest.

The volume at hand is an outcome of these stimulating exchanges during the two workshops, and thinking about emerging orders is particularly timely in view of the separation of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011. Moreover, the authors assembled in this volume came together through the second workshop's specific format. Organised as an international summer school, it aimed at bringing together junior and senior scholars of and from Sudan to give them the opportunity to work jointly on common questions and discuss challenges. Reflecting

³ More information on <http://www.nomadsed.de/en/events/review/symposia/newsdetails/internationale-sommerschulebr-institutionalization-and-regulation-emerging-orders-in-sudan-after-the-referendum/index.html>, accessed 22 August 2014.

these intense interactions, the volume gathers not only contributions of renowned Sudan scholars, but also includes articles of young, upcoming scholars, Sudanese and non-Sudanese, who together represent an emerging direction of Sudan research.

About the Authors

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Sandra Calkins worked on this book while she was a research associate at the Collaborative Research Centre 'Difference and Integration' at the Universities of Halle and Leipzig. She completed her Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Leipzig and is now a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology in Halle and a member of the LOST (Law, Organisation, Science & Technology) group at the University of Halle. She has co-edited the volume *Disrupting Territories: Land, Commodification and Conflict in Sudan* (James Currey, 2014), and she is currently working on a book manuscript entitled *Survival at the Margins: Processing Uncertainties in Sudan*.

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Wenzel Geissler and Julia Zenker, 2012) and an article on social and public experiments in postcolonial Africa (*Postcolonial Studies*, 2009).

Günther Schlee is the director of the Department 'Integration and Conflict' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (International African Institute, 1989), *How Enemies are Made* (Berg-hahn, 2008), *Pastoralism and Politics and Islam and Ethnicity* with Abdullahi Shongolo (both James Currey, 2012).

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List of Acronyms

ABC	Abyei Boundaries Commission
ABS	Agricultural Bank of Sudan
ARC	Agricultural Research Corporation
CDR	Conseil Démocratique Révolutionnaire
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration
EDF	Equatoria Defence Force
EES	Eastern Equatoria State
FROLINAT	Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad
GIZIS	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit International Services
GoNU	Government of National Unity
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GTZIS	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit International Services
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JIU	Joint Integrated Unit
MSF	Médecins sans Frontiers (Doctors without Borders)
NCP	National Congress Party
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIF	National Islamic Front
NMAPC	Nuba Mountains Agricultural Production Corporation
NRO	National Records Office
NRRDO	Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organisation

NRRDS	Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Support
NSS	National Security Service (South Sudan)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDF	Popular Defence Forces
RoSS	Republic of South Sudan
SAD	Sudan Archive of the University of Durham
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SDD	Sudanese dinars
SDG	Sudanese pounds
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
SSCCSE	South Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Forces
SSNPS	South Sudan National Police Service
SSR / SST	Security Sector Reform / Security Sector Transformation
SSRC	Southern Sudanese Referendum Commission
SUM	Sudan United Mission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPKO	United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

Emergence and Contestation of Orders in the Sudans

Sandra Calkins, Enrico Ille and Richard Rottenburg

Civic orders in the Sudans are wanting. They do not achieve what they are meant to achieve on their own, and it is always a bit of a puzzle why exactly one thing is accomplished instead of another. Or more precisely: it remains enigmatic why one form of order has emerged and not another one.

The chapters in this volume exhibit how civic orders, understood as those institutional figurations that affect all citizens of a country (usually for their betterment), give way to manifold other orderings in the Sudans. The observation that civic orders do not achieve by themselves what they are meant to achieve, e.g., health services do not work on their own but presuppose a number of other infrastructures as well as normative and onto-epistemological orders, is in fact a sociological truism that also applies to sites that are normally considered to be highly developed. There is a broad agreement in the social sciences that institutional orders imbue social life with some measure of predictability and stability, yet at the same time are also permanently emerging, about to morph into something new. Long-standing and continuing controversies in the social sciences concern some more specific aspects of the foundational circle between structure and agency.

Here we suggest worming our way out of the circle by identifying the dialectical moment in it.¹ For an institutional civic order to become structured and stable in the first place, it needs to be confirmed in action. Yet this confirmation of an order or an element of it only makes real sense, when one allows for the possibility of critique, which seeks to change and dis-confirm the emergent phenomenon. Hence, in this argument, the dialectical move between confirmation and critique allows the emergence of orders. Institutions thus confirm orders to

¹ In this move we follow French pragmatic sociology as developed, for instance, by Luc Boltanski (2011).

thwart real or anticipated challenges, but the outcome – whether renegotiation or maintenance of an order – is always open and settled in the situation. Orders that are not critiqued cannot be confirmed as orders. A certain level of instability and incertitude hence is not per se deplorable. Quite to the contrary, uncertainty about the future opens space to problematise normativities and renegotiate inequalities; it allows new societal forms to emerge.

Our contention, however, is that in the Sudans the instability of emerging orders, which can be qualified as civic, is pronounced. This, of course, is not dissimilar to quite a number of other countries in Africa and also beyond the continent. The country has been at war with itself since the early days of liberation from colonialism and most of the population never knew peace – a grim picture, which nevertheless looks quite different from region to region as the different chapters in this volume evidence. On the level of formal politics, opposition often was suppressed and answered with violence in the past decades, especially by manipulating and mobilising opponents' competing strategic interest groups, applying a divide-and-rule principle.

Our objective – as we wish to emphasise – is not to focus on formal politics and also not to hold the one or the other interest group or 'the state' accountable for the tragedy in the Sudans. In a juridical and political sense there certainly are persons, organisations and strategic groups, which carry much of the responsibility. Yet, from a social science vantage point, the more striking observation is that the institutional orders or the assemblages (one could speak of networks), emerging from the practices of all involved actors, result in a figuration (one could speak of an agencement), where agencies are distributed in such a way that no position is in control. In fact, the crux seems to be that even the most powerful collective actors of the figuration are unable to achieve their goals. While this again holds true for all political figurations – and particularly for those with high levels of democratic participation and rule of law – for authoritarian countries like the Sudans it is somewhat different. For one, the level of human suffering caused by such a tragic figuration is remarkable. And secondly, unlike in democratic countries with strong publics and independent judiciaries, the chances of being held accountable for breaking the law and for perpetuating or aggravating the tragedy are low.

The most striking example of the inability to institute civic orders – orders which could be valid for all citizens – is the separation of Sudan and South Sudan, which is the climax of a long history of aggravation. Sudan's political destiny has been troubled since independence in 1956, culminating in the longest civil war in contemporary Africa. One major colonial burden was the emergence of a narrow political elite of northern riverine Arabs, whom colonial policy and education had favoured (Sharkey 2008). As a consequence, the Republic of Sudan was and still is a highly contested state, and the Republic of South Sudan equally continues this history. Their dominant elite are caught in violent fights for power among themselves and with the states' citizens, resulting in cycles of civil war and fragile peace agreements.

But why have various attempts of ordering been unable to produce something more stable and binding for all? While in Sudan, there obviously are diverse webs of belief and life forms, this in itself is not problematic – unless it is diagnosed as the main ailment of Sudan by a puzzling agreement between political elites, a majority of those who suffer from the effect, and even some social and political analysts (Abd al-Rahim 1970; Beshir 1979; Turabi 1987; Ali 2012; Eltahir 2013).²

The political rhetoric of President Omar al-Bashir and his cohorts in the National Islamic Front (NIF), later the National Congress Party (NCP), championed after a military coup in 1989, is a case in point. Heralded as *inqāz* (salvation) and *mašrūʿ ḥaḍārī* (civilisational project), it defines Arab-Muslim identity as the consensual basis amidst contradictory and fragmentary dynamics, such as multi-culturalism and religious diversity.

Observing this political rhetoric, the impression arises that unity versus diversity – ethnic, linguistic, and religious – is the crux of troubles in the Sudans, and heterogeneity appears as nothing short of the core problem that governments have to handle. The integration of different ideas and orders into the framework of the nation state in the Sudans obviously is no success story. Today political systems are not

² Abd al-Rahim (1970) discussed how the question of identification was treated in the Sudanese nationalist movement. He described a split of the country based on apparent predominance of Arab-Muslim identity in the north and not in the south as 'a most tragic event' as 'the modern state, especially in Africa, is not and could not be founded on religious, racial, or even cultural homogeneity' (Abd al-Rahim 1970: 249).

significantly closer to finding and institutionalising orders, which can enable peaceful co-existence and equality of all citizens.

Many have pointed out the detrimental effects of discriminatory political discourses in Sudan, which time and again demonise diversity and thereby marginalise populations. The authors of this volume seek to test a different approach to emerging and contested orders in the Sudans, integrating various levels and avenues that are more attuned to people's moral understandings and their situational renegotiations across boundaries. Tracing how orders on different scales of social ordering begin to emerge facilitates critical interrogation and contestation of official political discourses in the Sudans.

To get to deeper layers that reach beyond how problems are defined and constructed in public political discourses, we draw on Murray Edelman's insights about politics as a spectacle. His main proposition was to regard the 'public faces of politics', that is, the discursive creation of problems, protagonists, enemies, etc., as part of a spectacle that – more or less intentionally – stages some selected events as important and simultaneously brushes other things aside.

Edelman (1988: 120) refers to 'controversial perspectives', denoting those elements and terms created and reproduced through political discourse that obscure other – possibly more enduring – aspects of social life. Edelman's notion of the public faces of politics suggests looking beyond the employed rhetoric at the more durable social formations. In this volume we thus seek to look beyond framings, which present cultural and religious diversity as key problems and thereby obscure long-lasting grievances, such as demands for the rule of law, distributive justice, political participation and a functioning infrastructure.

The various contributions in this volume address this puzzle from various perspectives. Together they attempt to take a careful and close look at exactly what orders everyday life in the Sudans as well as how the engaged forces and entities have persisted or changed. We assert that the separation of Sudan and South Sudan has not solved the many contradictions and ruptures haunting lives in this part of the world but is an expression of the same problem.

Conceptual Approach

This volume on emerging orders proposes to read the post-colonial history of the Sudans as resulting from a continuous struggle to find appropriate institutional orders.³ The main challenge – according to the hypothesis of this book – was and is the doing of institutional orders that enable peaceful co-existence, well-being and equal rights of self-determination for all citizens: civic orders. We do not propose yet another explanation of why ‘the Sudan’ has failed to become some kind of a stable and unified state. Instead, this book analyses institutional transformations by focussing on emerging institutional orders.

Institutional orders refer to rules of practice (classifications, commensurabilities, valuations and justifications), techno-social infrastructures and the semantic level of their figuration. In this approach to institutional orders, semantic forms (rules, categories, procedures, authentications, etc.) are main coordinating devices, which gain and keep stability as long as people take them to be valid and binding (Boltanski 2011). Their emergence, however, involves various heterogeneous interpretations of situations and desirable outcomes that have to be reconciled with each other and with centralising orders, such as the state apparatus. Equally challenging is the relation between various scales of institutional orders from local to global sites.

The point about focussing on emergence is capturing the novel, intermittent, and perhaps only short-term stabilisation of things before they disappear again – with or without more lasting effects. With this approach we seek to move beyond compartmentalised units of observation and analyses, such as local communities (e.g., the village), strategic interest groups, regions or nation-states, as well as apparently obvious historical periods, such as the first and second civil wars.⁴

³ Similarly, Beshir (1982: 130) concluded from the developments of the years 1956-1980 that ‘[t]he Sudan’s search for appropriate systems of government administration and economic development will continue’. One year before the second civil war, he assessed that ‘[e]xcluding a world catastrophe and assuming that the lessons of the last twenty-five years are well learned and action replaces rhetoric, there is no reason to be pessimistic’ (Beshir 1982: 130-131).

⁴ The terminology ‘civil war’ has, for example, been criticised for suggesting an internal conflict, detached from its historical, especially colonial, geopolitical and global economic bases (Ayers 2010).

A similar call to go beyond formalistic descriptions of institutional orders and commonplace dichotomies of actors, such as winners and losers, and to challenge the politics of seemingly coherent periodisations has been issued from political science. Berk, Galvan and Hattam (2013) sought to drive debates about institutional change by focussing on the ephemeral instead of the fixed. Similar to our argument (inspired by Boltanski and authors of earlier generations, like Norbert Elias) about the dialectic of confirmation and critique, these authors focussed on creative actions as a process through which all orders are made and stabilised but also are challenged and continually reconfigured. This means that they likewise argued from a post-foundational and performative position. Accordingly, neither the properties of people nor of things are fixed and stable a priori but emerge from dynamic interactions (Berk, Galvan and Hattam 2013: 6-7). Our approach is supported by their characterisation of institutional orders as always being partial, multiple and needing much work to be maintained:

Institutions contain multiple, overlapping elements, offering more than one template for any given situation. In this space, actors have room to dismantle orders, select useful parts, combine them in new ways, and produce what some have called hybrid, recombinant or syncretic institutions. ... This entails empirical observation of three kinds of creativity: making order, shoring it up, and smoothing over its messiness. (Berk, Galvan and Hattam 2013: 8)

We welcome this emphasis on practices and on diversity at the heart of institutions, and indeed, we are in a productive dialogue with Dennis Galvan since 2011. Yet, the analytical focus on political creativity and the related terminology tends to highlight rational and purposeful actors, how 'actors transform old habits and create new ones through deliberative recombinations' and how they 'piece together innovate solutions' (Berk and Galvan 2013: 33). This perhaps accords too much room for intent, interest and conscious deliberation. Other authors have pointed to a necessary condition of coordination, name-

ly, the ability to engage what is with different degrees of reflexivity.⁵ Goal-oriented action may demand being able to close one's eyes to contradictions and inconsistencies, using what Rottenburg (2005) has called a meta-code to maintain a minimal consensus among involved persons, to avoid from asking fundamental questions and to reach practical ends. We therefore are inclined to take the situation with its fundamental uncertainty about what is, what ought to be and what is of value as main unit of analysis. Starting from uncertainty enables us to inquire into the conditions, which enable coordinated action in the first place. Institutional orders then emerge not so much from planning and engineering actors, but from mundane testing, inquiring and experimenting with societal forms in various situations. This approach entails careful attention to situations in which institutions have established certain elements as binding and under what circumstances people challenge the institutional perspective.

In this spirit, we purposely talk of 'Sudans' in the plural. We seek to avoid taking for granted the lines drawn on a map around and through the former so-called Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. The term 'Sudans' entails existential uncertainties, diverse ideas and practices as well as contradictions of what can be subsumed within this label. It demands a clarification of what 'Sudan' means to whom and in which situations. It suggests that different Sudans are always coexisting, overlapping or nesting into each other.

The cliché of the north-south dichotomy appears in the public faces of political discourses. It conceals structural similarities and localised specificities, and it distracts from issues such as missing distributive justice, failing infrastructures but also from emerging forms of co-operation in attempts to establish civic common goods. The same critical caution needs to be applied to the re-examination of publicly highlighted topoi that result from the translation of complex social formations into stereotyped images, such as Arab Muslim identity.

⁵ Berk and Galvan focus on a range of creative activities between ram-shackling and engineering, but they still assume a very high consciousness about doings at all times, i.e., 'we ask what people think they are doing when they act creatively and thus tamper with rules, roles, and order. ... Then we ask who people think they are when they take it upon themselves to act creatively and tamper with rules, roles, and orders' (Berk and Galvan 2013: 39). Compare with Thévenot 2007 and Boltanski's (2011) differentiation of different registers of action and reflexivity.

Therefore, instead of taking religious, ethnic or cultural differences for granted or even problematic, the contributions in this volume consider how divergent ascriptions, ideas and interests are situationally constituted and negotiated in the Sudans. They thus set themselves apart from political analyses which tend to reduce Sudan's and South Sudan's crises to diversity issues or to rivalry between nation-states and power elites.

This task also requires highlighting substantial problems. The agreement on the so-called 'Four Freedoms' is a case in point. It sought to clarify the legal status of nominal South Sudanese citizens living in northern Sudan and vice versa. The bilateral agreement was supposed to guarantee the freedom of residence, the freedom of movement, the freedom to undertake economic activity, and the freedom to acquire and dispose of property (Manby 2012: 37). However, the governments in the Sudans haven proven to be unable to even guarantee 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' by failing to deliver equal public services throughout the countries and to hold the monopoly on violence, a precondition for the 'Four Freedoms'.⁶

This points to a crucial gap in the socio-political landscape of the Sudans. Central institutions do not format divergent interests in a way that allows peaceful negotiations and the articulation of critique. This institutional dysfunctionality then also directs attention to the vicious circle between the many ways in which people seek to evade institutional functions and how cynic governments can exploit this to foster divide-and-rule politics.

Yet, our objective is less to detect the presence or absence, functionality or dysfunctionality of certain institutions. Rather, departing from situations in which there are no formats to constitute and shape diverging interests in such a way that they can be peacefully negotiated, the studies in this volume are sensitive to the multiplicity of

⁶ Indeed, these 'four freedoms' differ in a noteworthy way from what became historically much more known as 'Four Freedoms', namely, those advanced in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 State of the Union address. These were freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear, which were then included in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Morsink 1999: 1). See Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the Other State and Related Matters between The Republic of the Sudan and The Republic of South Sudan, Addis Ababa, 27 September 2012, <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/files/2012/09/Nationals-Agreement-2709120001.pdf>, accessed 7 August 2014.

emerging orders in the social situations they describe and to their variant ways of ordering. This volume's authors attempt to identify some of the things that hold together in the Sudans, reflecting on what prevents or provides stability of orders and accounts for the perpetual impression of emergency. They also seek to locate contributions to issues of emerging orders in general scholarly debates and analyses of the Sudans' states of affairs, in order to complement and challenge older studies.

The rationale of this approach is not simply to fill in knowledge gaps, but also to reflect on the complicity of social science in reproducing the public faces of politics, when it shines the limelight on certain issues, while crowding out other important topics. Academic knowledge production cannot claim a neutral, objective position for itself but rather results from contested processes of ordering, involving various dimensions, such as university curricula and budgets, the agendas of funding institutions, academic life cycles, publishing policies and many more.

Reflecting on the organisation of social research as well as the topical and theoretical preferences directing our gaze, we thus not only recognize how previous studies have constructed their topics and thereby have enforced certain agendas ahead of others, but we also see how our own project of studying emerging orders is part of and co-constitutes emerging orders in the Sudans.

Most papers in this volume were penned by young scholars. The book thus provides glimpses into the directions and research interests of a new generation of Sudan researchers. It shows that the conceptual frame of the volume, namely, the aim to deepen our understanding of emerging institutional orders in the Sudans – allows different methodological choices, from macrostructural starting points to the analysis of micro-situations. The variety of sources, topics, methodologies and theoretical perspectives assembled in this volume indeed speaks a lively and diverse field of social studies. At the same time, the volume brings some difficulties to the fore. While we are happy about the gender balance among the authors, we regret that only two of the young authors are Sudanese scholars. The call for papers went out first and foremost to the participants of a summer school wherein Sudanese students by far outnumbered participants from other countries. It was difficult to ensure both a balanced representation and a

high quality of contributions. The volume's composition thus also reflects the challenging environment for research and higher education in the Sudans.

Structure of the Book

People in southern Sudan and other marginalised regions (Red Sea, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur), but also oppositional forces throughout northern Sudan have not voluntarily submitted to marginalising and discriminatory policies. They rather have often resisted their integration into a unitary and ultimately exploitative nation state. This resistance, including the ongoing conflicts, was suppressed by a political elite, which claimed to legitimately represent the nation state and referred to its duty to protect national security interests. In doing so, the political elite produced heterogeneity as the 'public face' of politics and thereby distracted – intentionally or not – from its politics of exclusion and practices of resource extraction. In spite of what 'the public faces of politics' suggest, contradictions and ruptures do not primarily occur because the question of cultural diversity has not been solved, or because of the political Other. Instead, exclusionary and exploitative practices persist and cripple attempts to solve such elementary issues, as the rule of law, distributive justice, political participation and functioning infrastructure. Thus, the optimism that independence itself was the most important achievement has to be challenged.

To articulate the concern for emerging orders and their institutionalisation in the Sudans, the book is organised into three sections:

'Borders and boundaries' traces emerging orders of distinction. This encompasses the compartmentalisation of humans, things and time-space, the more or less clear accentuation and delineation of differences, as well as attempts at stabilising relationships between units through practices of mapping, both in academic and extra-academic debates.

'Production and distribution' follows emerging orders of land use and shows how produce and other resources are distributed. It indicates recurring patterns of exclusion and ongoing struggles to renegotiate disadvantaged positions in such distributive arrangements.

‘Organisation and representation’ focuses more explicitly on attempts of engineering change as well as on the bodies and forms through which transformations are planned and enacted. This includes various topics, from rather neatly enclosed agricultural development projects, to regional public health services, political participation at the state level and demilitarisation in a post-conflict situation.

Borders and Boundaries

Processes of ordering start with distinctions. A volume on the Sudans, for instance, has to clarify what is subsumed and what is excluded by this term. While this clarification could start with a clear-cut definition, a focus on emerging orders means considering temporal and spatial units as subject to processes that can both retain or change the distinction of such units.

The chapter ‘Rethinking the Role of Historiography in Sudan at a Time of Crisis’ examines the consequences of the political separation of South Sudan for research on Sudan. Yoshiko Kurita asks from a historiographical point of view: does this new line on political maps establish a new distinction between research subjects? Are shared geographical and historiographical elements, such as the Nile Valley or the fight for independence from the British Empire, still valid arguments to speak of one ‘Sudanese history’? And how can a historical discussion encompass the changing semantic content of ‘Sudan’?

Instead of just presuming that a new geopolitical border – or older geopolitical borders, for that matter – necessitates corresponding units of observation, that is, Sudan and South Sudan, she traces events and processes that allow envisioning other distinctions. She juxtaposes revolutionary movements in Egypt and Sudan and follows their development in the *longue durée* through a political history of the Nile Valley, reaching up to recent protest movements in both countries. Following other historical trajectories can establish much larger units of observation, such as the Arab world or Africa, or smaller ones, such as ‘Sudan’ as one colony under British rule. Kurita shows that a closer look at these historical research subjects reveals many cross-cutting themes, both dividing and connecting. These thematic lines of inquiry and analysis are pursued in relation to recent political programmes,

such as the 'New Sudan' vision, that actively tried to redraw the way political spaces are ordered.

Emerging orders of distinction are also analysed in Andrea Behrends's chapter 'The Long History of Conflict, Integration and Changing Alliances on the Darfur/Chad Border'. She shows, through a historical perspective, how the border between Darfur and Chad did not receive its relevance from a line drawn on maps, but rather from the changing alliances among actors that negotiated their realms of influence, and used and shifted the border and its meaning in conflict settings.

Behrends questions conventional ways of conceiving and speaking of borders and boundaries. This led her to ask new questions and to productively reframe them: how are ethnic categories invoked by both involved actors and commentators to understand what is going on? How are polarised claims about the nature of conflicts able to explain how and why different actors get involved? How can a detailed historical analysis of patterns of alliances and disintegration provide a different outlook on contemporary violent conflicts?

The chapter analyses continuities of alliances and shows that in the border region, they were not primarily ethnically based. The border area's history rather emerges as intermingling and interfering negotiations of borders and boundaries. From the sultanates of Wadai and Darfur, to the recent turmoil in Darfur and eastern Chad, a wide array of actors, far beyond those stereotypical tribal groups, constitute the 'local' and are connected to the increasing warfare in it.

Rather than seeing orders as the manifest results of interest-driven, intentional actions, or of hierarchical structures in society, Behrends captures the complexity of historical developments and their contingencies. At the same time, her focus on orders searches out patterns among organisational and systemic features that manage to stabilise for some time. Behrends's analysis thus connects historical developments in Darfur to current issues.

Douglas H. Johnson's chapter 'Whose Land? Disentangling Border Claims in Sudan' is attentive to historical developments and contested claims to certain histories that vie for recognition in the present. He focuses on territorial borders as a particularly contested way of drawing boundaries in the Sudans. Johnson highlights the difficulty of corroborating controversial territorial claims both in the frame of

negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan about the borderline in Abyei and between Gaawar Nuer and Nyareweng Dinka. Borders emerge as entirely virtual objects, subject to contesting claims and imaginations that nevertheless gain significant power through their institutionalisation as a binding reality, based on other claims for rights and services. Johnson shows the strong role of historical claims as a substantiating argument in land conflicts. Thereby boundaries, which served as a more or less flexible orientation in mental geographies, turn into permanent and exclusionary borders. This qualitative shift in spatial ordering to compartmentalising and regulating access to land constitutes one of the major developments of twentieth century Sudan, with far-reaching effects upon rural communities in particular (Komey 2010; Gertel, Rottenburg and Calkins 2014).

With Nicki Kindersley's contribution, 'Identifying the South Sudanese,' the focus shifts to a related issue, namely, boundaries of identification. She deals with the question of how an emerging Southern Sudanese nationality is constituted in bureaucratic practices during registration in London for the January 2011 referendum. She studied how cases were negotiated, in which the Southern Sudanese nationality was questionable. Her contribution thus relates to the question of how the new border between northern and South Sudan operates as a technology to order people and things.

Her detailed look at individual life situations vis-à-vis administrative processes indicates how newly emerging orders can affect and change individuals and their understandings of belonging. Both spatial and administrative distinctions suggest – and often demand – clear-cut lines, especially when such lines are loaded with political definitions of We and Them. Individuals, however, often combine various ideas of belonging, which are much less clear-cut than formal bureaucratic procedures anticipate. Inconsistencies and contradictions thus demanded renegotiations of Southern Sudanese nationality to include individual cases that did not fit preconceived notions.

A contribution that likewise deals with emerging orders of distinction is Siri Lamoureaux's chapter, 'The Order of Iconicity and the Mutability of "the Moro Language"'. She concentrates on language as a symbolic cultural boundary. Her contribution provides a close look at emerging orders of everyday life among the Moro, a Nuba community, in Khartoum, specifically processes of ordering everyday communica-

tion. Her study traces negotiations surrounding the 'right' language for Christian liturgy, that is, the 'right' Moro dialect. These are by no means 'ordinary' issues, but she shows how the question about the 'right' Moro dialect links to much broader struggles of cultural identification and even survival, implicating a multitude of actors, such as members of the Sudanese government, Christian missionaries, a local language committee, American linguists, etc.

On comparing these contributions an element comes to the fore: emerging orders are intertwined with structuring technologies. In historiography, they included periodisation and compartmentalisation; in political alliances, agreements and discriminatory supply of weapons; in the establishment of political borders, markers of the borderline in the territory and on maps; in the administration of citizenship, forms and personal documents; and in language politics, grammatical rules and criteria of expertise.

While 'Borders and Boundaries' highlights the dividing aspects of emerging orders, the following sections focus more strongly on what holds things together in the social situations analysed.

Production and Distribution

The stabilisation of orders does not hinge only on cognitive dimensions and social construction of categories, it depends on material supports also, which can endow orders with legitimacy and urgency. This is particularly so in situations of scarcity where reproduction is based on natural resources. The organisation of distributive orders is crucial in such situations. This section presents four case studies from different areas in the Sudans, in which access to resources and their distribution is negotiated under conditions of urgency.

There is an older tendency in Sudan Studies to analyse resource-based conflicts with compartmentalised units of observation, such as occupational or ethnic groups, and a simple differentiation of modernity and tradition. Both the compartmentalisation of society into such groups and the evolutionary understanding of development lead to an oversimplified account of conflicts and their genesis.

The studies in this section present alternative accounts of how orders and conflicts emerge. Günther Schlee's contribution, 'Competing Forms of Land Use and Incompatible Identifications of Who Is to Benefit from Policies in the South of the North,' deals with identifi-

cations and types of land use in the Blue Nile State. It discusses the stakes of specific pastoralists, peasants and agro-industrial investors in different forms of land use and analyses their attempts to influence state regulations, which often work in contradictory or even mutually exclusive ways. Based on the question of who benefits from present regulations and who should benefit from land use, Schlee shows how production and identification are linked in a fluid relationship. Schlee's analysis of competing claims and how they are inscribed (or not) into orders of production and distribution provides a vivid and complex understanding of competing interests in Blue Nile State.

Overall, small-scale farmers and pastoralists often lose out in the open competition for resources. Schlee connects this to the lack of protective checks and balances at the state and national level. He concludes that in view of increasing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, state policies should serve the economic integration of disenfranchised parts of the population instead of promoting the interests of entrepreneurs.

The other studies in this section explore the emerging productive and distributive orders in which small-scale farmers and pastoralists in eastern Sudan and eastern South Sudan are involved. Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem examines recent socioeconomic transformations in south Gedaref State, highlighting small-scale farmers' adaptations to changing contexts. He analyses the effects of the secession of South Sudan and the burgeoning of gold mining on the agricultural labour force. What appears as small-scale farmers' creative adaptation is actually entangled with governmental policies and their attempts at subversion.

In contrast to economic hardships resulting from governmental policies, Immo Eulenberger argues that changing relations between pastoralists in south-eastern South Sudan and successive governments, although tense, were overall defined by a spirit of mutual *laissez-faire*. Governments did not prevent pastoralists from finding stable social and economic arrangements that work for them.

Given that the multitude and complexity of existing and emerging social orders make generalisations not just difficult, but potentially distorting, Sandra Calkins's contribution ventures from a different starting point. She develops her argument from a seemingly small situation, the distribution of gifts by a Kuwaiti humanitarian organisa-

tion in a village mainly populated by Rashaida. Her study examines the controversy over the distribution of the charitable gifts in the community and the negotiation between what is prescribed by the organisation and who people think should be prioritised to meet popular understandings of fairness. Calkins analyses justifications and critiques of arguments and thereby shows how distributive orders are not given but rather emerge from negotiations of what is just and what is tolerable in a given situation.

To sum up, although working within different theoretical paradigms, these four studies stress the role of individual agency in processes of ordering and the always contingent outcomes of actions, yet without reifying agency either collective or individual. They not only examine how individuals act in specific situations and contribute to the making of distributive orders, but also how normative understandings of fair economic orders – with their particular agencies – form part of social negotiations. In view of their urgency for social and economic reproduction, productive and distributive orders cannot constantly be at odds with each other. Otherwise, this would hamper cooperation and therewith production and distribution of produce. The final section focuses on organisation and representation.

Organisation and Representation

Our argument about the absence of inclusive institutional orders in the Sudans, resistance and recurrent violent conflict is based on their political histories. However, chapters in other sections also feature the Sudans as sites that experience relative stability, relative in the eyes of those who live them, and relative in comparison to other places and sites. We argue that institutional orders are needed, orders that allow a growing population, whose engagement in subsistence production and connected social worlds is decreasing, to sustain life and health. This calls for new and increasingly inclusive forms of organisation and representation of more diverse social worlds.

These forms of organisation and representation are subject to diverse expectations and forms, which need to be mediated to be valid for all. Technologies were already identified as important devices of mediation in the emergence of orders. For technologies to become stable they need to be enmeshed with institutions. We conceive of institutions as having a technological and a semantic side, which work

together to qualify elements of life as real, true and authentic, and therewith establish what counts as reality. Thereby, institutions can orient actions, but the extent to which they do so depends upon whether actors reflexively interrogate or take them for granted, in other words, in how far institutionalisation took place. The process of institutionalisation, or the stabilisation of emerging orders, is the focus of the last section of this volume.

A rich period to study this issue is the so-called post-war period after 2005, when many attempts were made to change the institutions that had nurtured violent confrontations. This phase was initiated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended a long war (1983-2005) and ushered in a transitory phase, the so-called Interim Period (2005-2011). The CPA appeared as a significant watershed, seemingly settling the civil wars in Sudan, and enabling South Sudanese to decide for or against independence by stipulating the provisions for a referendum after the Interim Period. It resulted from a long and painstaking negotiation (2002-2004) between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, and inscribed an idea of sharing into the heart of state formation.

The CPA also included many interconnected organisational arrangements to abolish war-related and exclusionary forms of governance (Wassara 2009). The subsequent Interim National Constitution of 2005 stressed the need to respect Sudan's religious, ethnic and cultural diversity.⁷ The CPA and the promise of a new constitution and of peaceful coexistence initially nurtured hopes for new avenues, through which consensus could be forged and pluralism fostered (Salmon 2007). These hopes, however, were soon dashed, leading to the separation of Sudan and South Sudan as well as to renewed violent conflicts only six years later (Rottenburg, Komey and Ille 2011).

The four chapters of this section trace interventions designed to transform wartime institutions. Enrico Ille analyses the attempt of an international non-governmental organisation to transform its food relief into a rehabilitation programme. While the former had been based

⁷ The so-called chapeau of the CPA described the settlement as 'founded on the values of justice, democracy, good governance, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, mutual understanding and tolerance of diversity with the realities of the Sudan' (GoS and SPLM 2005: xi). The Interim Constitution copied this language in its preamble, describing the people of the Sudan as '[m]indful of religious, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in the Sudan'.

on covering urgent needs during a humanitarian disaster, the post-war programme tried to organise distribution based on a principle of repaying loans.

The case study discusses a small negotiation between individuals and organisations over a crisis in a seed bank programme in Kubang, a village in the Nuba Mountains, between 2005 and 2008. The negotiation pertained to the morality of returning loans in the form of seeds, which seemed to contradict the expectation of unconditional generosity generated by years of relief. Ille elaborates how the uncertainty of a post-war situation impeded orchestrating change through this type of development intervention.

Mariam Sharif supports this stance with a study on medical kits as a type of intervention designed for emergencies. She analyses their changing role in the provision of health care in the Nuba Mountains during and after the war. Sharif argues that the use of medical kits in the post-war situation indicates an institutionalisation of health care as emergency intervention rather than the emergence of a stable public health service. In conclusion, the war-peace divide is questioned as an adequate framework to describe and understand the emerging quality of institutional developments.

Guma Kunda Komey discusses more general attempts, in the post-war Nuba Mountains (2005-2011), to establish peaceful social orders. He investigates the context and negotiation of an ambiguous concept, namely, popular consultation. In the CPA, the term was not clarified, leading to controversial expectations of what this provision implies – from a right to self-determination to a mere tool for the region's population to voice its assessment of the post-war years and inform policy makers on the way forward.

The ostensible intention had been to further new orders of legitimate representation, but instead the region was plunged into war once again. Rather than favouring the creation of new forms of representation and organisation, confrontational and exclusionary principles of political representation were actually promoted. As a consequence, tensions were not dissolved, but merely suppressed for a short while.

Timm Sureau further documents post-war attempts at engineering institutional change and their practical adaptations. He investigates the logic of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)

programmes in Torit. He points to a particular emerging order: DDR efforts, one of the most prestigious tools of UN rehabilitation programmes, in Torit not only failed to accomplish their goals in the end, but also from their beginning failed to reach the target populations, those regarded as central impediments to a transition from a violent to a peaceful order, namely, active, able-bodied soldiers. He shows how, contrary to its purpose, DDR was used to reorganise the military and to make it more efficient.

Conclusion

The initial claim that something awry goes on with the institutional orders in the Sudans is based conceptually and normatively on the findings presented in these chapters. We conceive of emerging orders as those intersecting meanings and materialities that hold people and things together in society; they are not stable but contingently negotiated. The first part of the volume, 'Borders and Boundaries,' follows processes of distinction between here and there, in and out, we and them, right and wrong, on topic and off topic. It shows that borders and boundaries should not be conceived of as clear-cut, fixed lines between people and things, but as subject to changing or even situational redrawing.

The second part, 'Production and Distribution,' examines struggles over access to productive resources as negotiation of orders that should provide both sufficient economic output and distributive justice. The main focus is on individual actions and how they can contribute to a renegotiation of emerging orders. Thereby the contributions likewise emphasise the need for cooperation in social reproduction.

The studies in part three, 'Organisation and Representation,' introduce institutionalisation as the process by which orders stabilise. They start from the prevalence of violent dissension and trace attempts to change institutional deficiencies after 2005. This shows once more how orders do not result directly from intended courses of action, planning and orchestration, and cannot be explained with reference to power, interests or given institutional orders, but emerge from intermingling and interfering consequences of social actions.

Most of the studies in this volume have no success stories to tell. Widespread tensions – latent or out in the open – characterise the social worlds they describe. We desist from using these studies to promulgate and predict a certain political future for the Sudans. Rather, we see our volume as a contribution to a conceptual language to grasp the emergent character of social orders and avoid mechanical or stereotypical understandings of what is going on. We try to expose important dynamics which are occurring behind the ‘public faces of politics’. At the same time, we maintain that our main observation can serve as a normative baseline: unless new institutional orders emerge that allow and mediate contestation as a productive, innovative element, things will continue to go awry in both Sudans.

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Rethinking the Role of Historiography in Sudan at a Time of Crisis: Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Sudanese History'

Yoshiko Kurita

With the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, the 'Sudan' (Republic of Sudan) we used to know disappeared. Although this marks a new beginning for the people of South Sudan, for whom we wish the brightest future, no one can deny that it is also the beginning of an uncertain future for the whole region. The independence of the south did not put an end to the problems from which the Republic of Sudan as a whole had been suffering, such as the exclusionary nature of the political system, unequal patterns of economic development, and the ambitions and interference of various international actors in the region. These crises have not only remained unresolved, but, with the advent of new circumstances brought about by the independence of the south, may even have been aggravated or further complicated. The Sudanese people will be compelled to continue efforts to overcome these crises.

Crisis is not confined to the political and economic domains. The disappearance of 'Sudan' as we knew it means that all related concepts such as 'the Sudanese nation', 'Sudanese nationalism', and even 'Sudanese history' have disappeared as well, or at the very least require serious re-examination. This constitutes not only an academic problem for students of 'Sudanese nationalism' or 'Sudanese history', but also a very substantial problem for the Sudanese people themselves, threatening the very basis of their identity and frame of reference. The 'Sudanese nation' no longer exists. True, its nature has never been self-evident and has always been contested, but it nevertheless constituted the focal point of the whole political processes and dialogues in Sudan. It is likewise unclear to which 'Sudanese history' Sudanese people should turn as basis of their identity and source of inspiration for future development. What was 'Sudan' to begin with?

This chapter is an attempt to deconstruct the concept of ‘Sudanese history’, examine its relevance and implications, and reconstruct it (hopefully) on a new basis. Needless to say, it is an enormous task which exceeds the capacity of any individual researcher. Many historians will have to work collectively on this subject. What is essential, at the same time, will be a continuous dialogue between historians and the Sudanese people, for the final answer to this question will be found only in the course of people’s own struggles for a better future.

The Cycle of Revolution and Counter-revolution in the ‘Nile Valley’

As the first step in the attempt to deconstruct (and reconstruct) Sudanese history, just as a sort of mental exercise, let us situate ‘Sudan’ in a broader (Middle Eastern and African) context.

The year 2011 was, interestingly enough, an eventful year not only for Sudan but also for the Middle East as a whole, for it witnessed a most impressive outburst of popular energy in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, with the so-called ‘Arab spring’. If we look back into history, however, we find that this kind of revolutionary situation had also occurred in the region more than a century ago, in the days of the Urabist Revolution in Egypt (1879-82). This revolution, named after its leader Aḥmad ʿUrābī, was essentially a democratic movement, demanding a political system based on a constitution. It was a movement posed against the corrupt and despotic local Egyptian regime (the Khedival government), and against the economic invasion of Western powers, such as Britain and France, which were supporting and manipulating this despotic regime at the same time.

A caricature from the pro-Urabist magazine *Abū Naẓẓāra* (figure 1) shows how the situation was perceived by the Egyptian revolutionary forces at that time. The emergence of revolutionary political culture, which was expressed in a most striking way in the Taḥrīr Square in 2011, had been witnessed in the course of the Urabist Revolution as well. Just as the Egyptian people in 2011 mocked and scorned Mubarak, in 1881 they too had been mocking and insulting their despotic rulers.



Figure 1: The Urabist Revolution in Egypt as depicted in *Abū Nazzāra* (1881). The bearded 'bride' stands for the Egyptian despotic regime which is about to marry John Bull, thus selling Egypt to the European bondholders. The angry Egyptian masses are protesting against this illegal marriage.

What is significant is that this explosion of popular energy against a corrupt local regime and foreign pressure was not confined to Egypt only. The Middle East and North Africa as a whole region was witnessing more or less the same phenomena at that time, although the forms in which resistance was expressed differed in each country.

In Egypt and Turkey, resistance took the form of a constitutional movement. In other places such as Libya and Sudan, it took a more

religious form. However, all movements were caused by a common situation.¹

The Sudanese Mahdist movement was one of these ‘synchronic’ revolutions. Expressed in a singularly religious way, it was still a popular movement, against the corrupt Khedival government and growing foreign intervention, and had much in common with the Egyptian Urabist revolution. Actually, there existed a sort of interaction between the two movements, and we can observe a reflection of this in another caricature from *Abū Nazzāra* (figure 2), which shows the sense of solidarity with the Sudanese Mahdist movement on the part of the Egyptian Urabist intellectuals. It portrays the Sudanese Mahdi in a positive light, while disparaging General Gordon, who had just been dispatched by the British government to Sudan to deal with the situation.



Figure 2: The emergence of the Mahdi in Sudan as depicted in *Abū Nazzāra* (1884).

¹ Exceptionally deep insight into the nature of popular movements in the region in the 1870s and 1880s is in the writings of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1911), an Englishman who sympathised with the Urabist Revolution. It seems that what made this insight possible for the author (a member of the British establishment) was his friendship with Middle Eastern intellectuals.

Although the Urabist revolution and the Mahdist movement were eventually defeated and both countries colonised by the British, the phenomenon of 'synchronic revolutions' in Egypt and Sudan (the so-called 'Nile Valley') recurred after the First World War. Inspired by the 1919 Revolution in Egypt (which demanded independence of Egypt from the British protectorate), the '1924 Revolution' took place in Sudan under the leadership of the White Flag League. Once again the revolutions were thwarted however, and after 1924 British colonialism more or less succeeded in putting an end to the revolutionary interaction between Egypt and Sudan. Interestingly enough, separatist policy, based on the British colonial wisdom of 'divide and rule', started to be applied at this stage, not only between Egypt and Sudan, but also inside Sudan itself – between the north and south. To contain the influence of potentially revolutionary modern social forces, a policy strengthening and even creating 'traditional' social forces was introduced ('indirect rule'). As a result, Sudanese society was 'tribalised' to a great extent, both in the north and the south. The late 1920s and the 1930s were the age of counter-revolution in Sudan.²

So far, discussion has focused on the cycle of revolution and counter-revolution, so to speak, in the Nile Valley. This does not mean, however, that the 'Nile Valley' is a self-evident entity which is always relevant as an object of analysis. It has been important to examine the situation in the 'Nile Valley' region only because it was an arena in which struggle between colonialism and the anti-colonial movements unfolded. Under different circumstances, it would be necessary to think about other analytical units, such as the 'Arab world', 'Africa', 'the Horn of Africa' and so on, and to situate Sudan in that respective context. We have been dealing mainly with the geopolitics of the British Empire, in which control over the Suez Canal had a crucial meaning, but in the second half of the twentieth century, i.e., the stage of the Cold War, for example, the importance of Sudan in the context of U.S. strategies would be better understood, if we take into consideration factors such as the Congo revolution as well.

² Incidentally, the genesis of 'Sudanese studies' with their manifold disciplines, such as anthropology, history, and so on, goes back to this very period. Critical analysis of the function of these sciences in colonial context will be necessary.

What is important is an attempt to re-examine and deconstruct the concept of 'Sudan' by locating it in a broader colonial context.

Colonialism Internalised: Sudan as a Colonial State

So far, we have been taking an 'outward' approach (i.e., looking beyond the borders of Sudan), so to speak, in our attempt to deconstruct our concept of 'Sudan', but let us take an 'inward' approach as well as our second step.

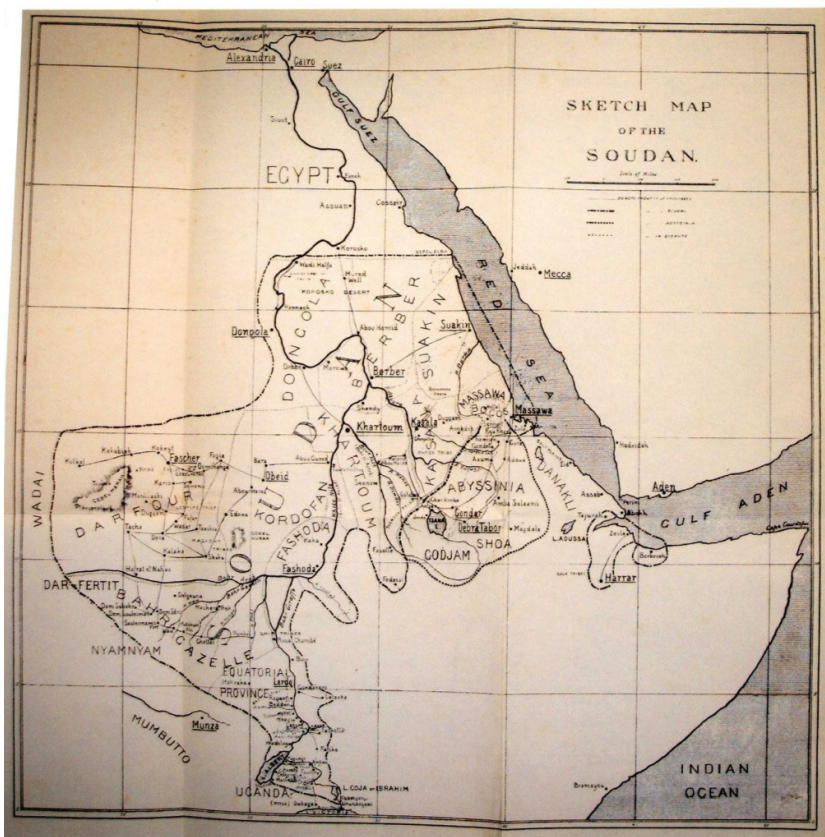


Figure 3: The map of Sudan drawn by C. G. Gordon, in Hill 1885.

As was discussed, the question of colonialism is an essential factor in the history of Sudan. What makes the problem more complicated is that Sudan was not only the object of invasion and colonisation, but the 'Sudanese state' itself was created in the course of a colonising

process. This means that colonialism was ‘internalised’, so to speak, and colonial structures, both economic and political, were installed in the modern Sudanese state from the very beginning. A map, hand drawn by Gordon in the late 1870s (figure 3), gives us a vivid image of this process. It shows how the prototype of the modern Sudanese state was constructed as a result of conquest and colonial expansion carried out by the Egyptian Khedival regime and then by European administrators like Gordon himself.

The situation was similar for a number of African and Middle Eastern states which were artificially created in the course of colonial rule. In the case of Sudan, however, the result was serious. In this country, because of its vastness and its complicated geographical and ethnic make-up, the uneven development caused by colonialism between the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’ took a most striking form. The gap was huge. Khartoum, the capital, monopolised power and wealth and functioned as a colonising centre. Areas such as the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, Darfur, and the south, in contrast, were increasingly exploited, marginalised, and virtually became colonies within the country (so-called ‘internal colonies’).³ And this colonial structure was inherited and reproduced even after independence. Colonialism was internalised and remained in the guise of ‘national’ regimes.

It is clear that, under such circumstances, a simple dichotomy between ‘colonialism’ and ‘nationalism’ does not work. How can we deconstruct this dichotomy and look deeper into the actual situation in ‘Sudan’?

In Search of Alternative Views

One way to deconstruct the ‘nationalist’ discourse is to re-examine the reality and actual process of the national liberation movement itself. In Sudan, just like in other African and Asian countries after independence, the memories of anti-colonial movements the country experienced have been hailed and glorified, such as the Mahdist movement and the 1924 Revolution. But a closer look into the actual pro-

³ The concept of ‘internal colonialism’ has been proposed by critics of uneven development such as Gonzalez Casanova, Harold Wolpe, and Michael Hechter. As for the multi-layered structure of colonialism and the role of the ‘nation-state’ in this context, see Itagaki 1992 as well.

cesses of these movements reveals that there was always a conflict of interests and aspirations between the masses and the elite. While the essential basis of anti-colonial struggle is the movement of the masses, and while they constitute the driving force of the whole process, the elites try to control, 'institutionalise', and contain the energy of masses, sometimes in complicity with imperialism.

Thus, in the case of the 1924 Revolution, we find what was important was not only the struggle between British imperialism and the Sudanese people, but also the struggles within Sudan over the question of which kind of social force was entitled to speak in the name of the 'Sudanese nation'. Sufficient attention should be paid to conflict of interests among different social forces such as religious and tribal notables, merchants, *effendīya* (governmental employees, a sort of modern social force), and the poor urban masses. The plight of the 'White Flag League' and its leader, ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, can only be understood in the context of this conflict (Kurita 1989). Class analysis is possible in the case of the nineteenth century Mahdist movement as well, if attention is paid to the interactions and tensions between different social forces which took part in the movement, such as rural masses (both sedentary and nomadic) and *jallāba* (merchants). Several Sudanese scholars have examined the structure and nature of the Mahdist state (the first 'national' regime in Sudan) from a socioeconomic point of view.⁴

By paying attention to the conflict between the masses and the ruling elite, we can emancipate the history of 'Sudanese nationalism' from its conventional narrative (where emphasis was placed on the role of two leading families, i.e., the Mahdi family as the symbol of the Mahdist movement and the Mirghani family as that of the 'Unionists') and rewrite it 'from below'. For the ordinary masses that actually took part in the anti-colonial struggle, the difference between those 'two trends' mattered little. When we examine closely the social background, family history, and career of individuals who took part in anti-colonial struggle, we find that essentially the same masses rose up in the Mahdist movement and in the 1924 Revolution (which called for

⁴ Muhammad Said al-Qaddāl, a Sudanese historian, has done pioneering work in this field (see Al-Qaddāl 1986 and Al-Qaddāl 1993). Fatima Babiker Mahmoud (Mahmoud 1984) also tried to examine the nature of the Mahdist state as a forming process of the early Sudanese bourgeoisie.

the 'unity of the Nile Valley', and hence is regarded as the prototype of the 'Unionist' trend). Talking about 'two different trends' within the 'nationalist' elite and writing the political history of Sudan based on this discourse can be, therefore, misleading. We might argue that this style of narrative relates back to the methods of British colonial authorities, who used to control, manipulate, and domesticate nationalism by coordinating between the elites of the 'two camps'.



Figure 4: ʿAli ʿAbd al-Latīf, the leader of the 1924 Revolution, in his youth (photograph by courtesy of his family).

If we are to rewrite Sudanese history ‘from below’, another important point is the need to pay attention to the role of people from marginalised areas, such as the south and the Nuba Mountains. In the case of Sudan, the question of marginalised areas sometimes significantly overlaps with the question of class. In the Revolution 1924, the leadership of ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Laṭīf had a crucial meaning, because he was not only an ex-officer, a member of the *effendiya*, but also, in terms of origin, of a particular background (figure 4).⁵ He belonged to what the British authorities called the ‘de-tribalised blacks’, i.e., people who were originally from the marginalised areas but were uprooted from their home by slavery and compelled to live inside northern society. This means, while being a member of the *effendiya*, he had at the same time maintained social ties with the urban lower classes (Kurita 1997).

When, inspired by the case of ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, the modern history of Sudan is re-examined, we find that the people from marginalised areas continued to play a crucial role in different stages: the mutiny at Kassala in 1864-65, the role of the *jihādīya* troops in the Mahdist movement, etc. (Kurita 2003).

Interest in the plight of people from marginalised areas was expressed in a number of important works concerning slavery and formerly enslaved people published by Sudanese researchers in the 1990s (Sikainga 1996; Nuqud 1995).

Reconstructing ‘Sudanese History’ after July 2011

A critical analysis of the nature of the modern Sudanese state has not only been an ‘academic’ project in the narrow sense but also a political project, in which democratic forces in Sudan have been eagerly involved. Thus, we find that the ‘New Sudan’ vision, advocated by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and supported and shared by the northern democratic forces in the 1990s, is based on essentially the same idea: the necessity of deconstructing the Sudanese state which was the product of colonialism (‘Old Sudan’) and of reconstructing it on new bases, i.e., democracy, balanced development, respect for the rights of those living in marginalised areas. It

⁵ Both his parents were formerly enslaved. His mother was a Dinka from the south, and his father was from the Nuba Mountains.

was argued that by building a 'New Sudan' based on the concept of citizenship, free from racial and religious discrimination, Sudan would be able to maintain its unity.⁶

When we look at the present situation, however, we find that this ambitiously democratic vision has not been fulfilled. Although the people of the south exercised their rights of self-determination, this did not lead to maintaining the unity of Sudan. International intervention in the region is growing. The democratisation of northern Sudan is yet to come.

Why was the vision of 'New Sudan' thwarted? And, under such circumstances, what are the main tasks and problems which the democratic forces (now divided between the 'two Sudans') will be required to tackle in the future? This question concerns various political actors in the Sudan(s), and it also concerns those who have been engaged in the study of society and history of this region and sympathised with the plight and struggle of its people(s).

First, when we examine the failure of the 'New Sudan' vision, we find that one of the factors that contributed to division and conflict was a change in the international situation. After the end of the Cold War, the balance of power in international politics changed, and Western (especially U.S.) interests in the region grew. As an entry to the 'Great Lakes District' and as part of the so-called 'Greater Horn of Africa', Sudan's importance in U.S. Africa policy increased, and this fact had its effect on the course of events. In the earlier part of this chapter, the importance of situating Sudan in a broader, colonial context was pointed out. It seems that in the 1990s, democratic forces in Sudan failed to be fully conscious of this broader (neo-colonial) context. Engulfed by the urgent task in front of them, i.e., confrontation with the dictatorial regime, perhaps they failed to pay sufficient heed to the changing international situation. In the future, democratic forces in Sudan (both in the north and south) will be required to be more conscious of the broader contexts in which their struggles are taking place.

Second, the plight of marginalised areas should not be treated in isolation but grasped comprehensively as part of the issues with which Sudan as a whole has been faced. Otherwise, thinking will be

⁶ See SPLM 1983 and NDA 1995. As for the views expressed by the democratic forces on the question of peace and democracy in Sudan, see Bābikir 2005.

trapped by 'identity politics', opening a way to further segmentation of society and the loss of solidarity among different groups of people.

Third, the social movements of peoples in marginalised areas should not be isolated but located and analysed in relation to and in interaction with other democratic movements such as the women's movement, the labour movement and so on. The history of these democratic movements deserves more attention, and more work should be done in this domain. Up to now, the writing of Sudanese history has tended to emphasize the history of anti-colonial struggle in the narrow sense. However, if colonialism was internalised in the Sudanese state and reproduced even after independence, as pointed out, we might argue that these democratic movements are a sort of continuation of the anti-colonial struggle. In Sudan after independence, the task of emancipation from colonial structure (both economic and political) has continued in the form of the labour movement, the peasant movement, the women's movement, et cetera.⁷

Fourth, in studying the history of popular struggle, more attention should be paid to the significance of unarmed resistance. Returning to the subject of the 'Arab spring' in this context, what was most remarkable about the Taḥrīr Square Revolution in 2011 was that it was accomplished by peaceful means. In past revolutions in the 'Nile Valley', initiatives often tended to be in the hands of soldiers.⁸ Scenes from Taḥrīr Square suggest, however, that the military no longer has a progressive role to play in the Nile Valley.⁹ And this might apply to the liberation movements in Sudan's marginalised areas as well.

It is true that, in most cases, the people of marginalised areas in Sudan resorted to armed resistance because of violent suppression by the central government. The cause of a marginalised area, however, once it is expressed in a military way, inevitably invites even more violent suppression by the regime, opening pathways for foreign intervention and eventually leading to the fragmentation of the country. It

⁷ For analysis of democratic movements, see Ali 1989; Hale 1996; Sikainga 1996; and Sikainga 2003. Important data concerning the movement of workers, peasants, and women after independence are also found in SCP 1965.

⁸ In the Egyptian Urabist Revolution, Aḥmad ʿUrābī and the armed forces under his command played a significant role. ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, the leader of the Sudanese 1924 Revolution, also was an ex-officer.

⁹ They do have a role to play, but no longer a 'progressive' one. In the case of Egypt, the nature of the 'Supreme Military Council', which took over power after the 2011 popular revolution, demonstrates this point.

seems that, where liberation of the marginalised areas of Sudan is concerned, possibilities for non-military ways of struggle need to be explored. It might be pointed out, in this context, that in the 1990s and in the early stage of the transitional period after the CPA (2005), the SPLM gained many supporters within northern society, not necessarily as an armed organisation, but as a social and cultural movement offering a radical alternative vision of the future of Sudan. Possibly the causes of those in marginalised areas could be fulfilled by political struggle, if they succeed in building a truly effective alliance with other democratic movements in Sudan.

Sudan is in crisis, and enormous difficulties are on their way. By re-examining its history, deconstructing the conventional narrative, and restoring the memories of popular movements and aspirations, however, a way to overcome the present crisis may be found.

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The Long History of Conflict, Integration and Changing Alliances on the Darfur/Chad Border

Andrea Behrends¹

The border area between Darfur and Chad is a vast, sandy region characterised by occasional dramatic rock formations, small, robust bushes and trees, and frequent dry riverbeds that draw a vein-like pattern into the landscape. This landscape has come to global fame through the highly mediated images of refugees and overcrowded camps since the outburst of the Darfur War in 2003 (Prunier 2005; Flint and de Waal 2005, 2008; Mamdani 2009). The war ravaged the area between 2003 and 2008 until, after seemingly endless rounds of peace talks, the governments of Chad and Sudan signed a peace agreement. This entailed the installation of a mixed army unit of Sudanese and Chadian soldiers to guard the border and ended all international military interventions in the region. Apart from minor skirmishes, it seems as if the conflict calmed down considerably. Nevertheless, more than 200,000 refugees still live in Chad in twelve camps, managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The refugees claim they still feel too insecure to give up their relative stability and return to Darfur. This feeling of on-going insecurity is justified, given that rebel movements have not ceased to take up arms, and the governments of both countries have countered by sending fighter jets into the area (AFP 2013).

The young men in this border region, many of whom had been part of the rebel movements, have found a new way of making money. They work in the gold mines that have sprung up all over the Sudan, particularly in South Darfur and Kordofan. Recently the situation in Darfur escalated again in shootings and large-scale violence, leading to new refugee movements into Chad, this time mainly of young men (RFI 2013). My interpreter in Chad, Brahim Mahamat Ali, spoke to one of

¹ Research for this chapter was financed by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale, the Volkswagen Foundation, and the European Commission. Parts of this chapter were previously published in Behrends 2007.

the young men who had reached the garrison town of Adré, the capital of the department of Asoungha, across the Chadian border. The young man told Brahim that he had gone to Sudan in search of gold. When he came to the place slightly north of El-Geneina, the capital of Western Darfur, he rented a piece of land 'from the Arabs who owned the place' together with six other men. They dug holes up to 60 feet deep, letting each other down with ropes and standing down there, up to their hips in water, for hours on end in search of the precious metal. They had searched for a long time but did not find gold, until one day someone did find some. Then 'other Arabs' came and claimed to have given the land for too little to the current owners from whom the young men had rented their land. When the current landlords rejected to pay more, the other group returned with weapons and horses and started to shoot. He explained that many of the gold diggers died that day and that the attackers cut the ropes of those still in the holes, leaving the men to die in the mine shafts. The young man described that on being attacked, he and other miners left without their belongings. They ran, traumatised, to the next village and from there, with the help of the villagers, transferred on trucks to the other side of the border.

As a result of the intensifying conflicts among different 'Arab' groups laying claims to the land, tens of thousands have looked for refuge in Chad. The UNHCR was prepared to leave the country, after having reduced both staff and financial means for the still existing camps, but was obliged to remain and to increase its work in the region (RFI 2013b). The conflicts led young men to seek work with newly formed Chadian and Sudanese rebel groups, in exchange for small incomes.

The risky efforts of young men to find a way to 'make money' and advance their lives, when neither education nor paid work is available, is characteristic of this region. The rapid changes in their occupations – being rebels first, then gold miners, then refugees after barely escaping deathly violence and possibly re-joining rebel groups – support the overall argument that in order to survive, the people in this zone relate to the border as a resource that enables them to cut through fixed boundaries of group belonging or occupation. This is not a new development; this constant movement has been ongoing for centuries.

In this chapter, I argue that the border region between Chad and Sudan affects and is affected by a broad field of international actors, from neighbouring Libya, to Egypt, France and the United States. The young man's report of his adventures as a gold miner suggests he was threatened by 'Arab' violence. This chapter contributes to debates about the often proclaimed notion that the Darfur conflict is rooted in ethnic racism between so-called 'Arabs' and 'Black Africans'. Although the rhetoric of 'ethnic violence' has been taken up by many to categorise opponents in the border area, I will outline a historical pattern of allying and re-allying groups across what is now the Chad/Sudan border. I will argue that different actors have instrumentalised this pattern of group formation in the past, aggravating conflict and increasing the difficulty of reconciliation up until today, by causing unprecedented forms of tribal hatred in the region. The chapter attempts to disentangle complex historical connections in order to develop a frame for understanding recent violent developments in the border region.

Approaching the Issue

By providing a historical perspective on alliances and rivalry in the Chad/Sudan border region, this contribution challenges some of the easy-fit explanations of the origins of ongoing conflicts in this area. Different explanatory traditions have emerged. One highlighted that this region's entire population has been Muslim for a long time, thus excluding the relevance of the 'Muslim-Christian divide' – attributed in a similarly unconvincing way to the country's north-south conflict. Because ethnic divisions did not withstand scrutiny either, a racial explanation of 'Arabs vs. Africans' seemed to make most sense to the media representing the conflict. Essentialising their relations, it has been suggested that these two groups stand in age-old conflict with each other. This view needs to be critically reassessed.

I will argue that regional alliances and rivalries often shift, and that, at least in the past, they rarely followed ethnic or occupational lines. In fact, intermarriage and economic interdependence between nomadic and sedentary people historically resulted in cultural assimilation to the point where new identities were adopted (Abdul-Jalil 1984; Babiker 2006: 44). Thus, this process of 'becoming' Zaghawa, Fur,

Masalit or Arab helped neutralise the underlying potential for conflict and violence. To approach the question of why today certain groups in Darfur – that have all been similarly neglected by colonial and governmental planning and political decision making over the past hundred years – tend to ally with the present government, while others rebel and look for allies elsewhere, this chapter will look at accounts of historical developments between different groups over the past centuries. To illustrate the ‘changing alliances’ approach, a historical perspective on the processes that link (and separate) the neighbouring regions of Wadai and Darfur will be brought forward. The historical positions of the two once powerful sultanates – and of the smaller sultanates and kingdoms between them – are presented to show patterns of local alliance building and how the forming and breaking of alliances intensifies with external involvement.

The critical point to be made is that the current radius of action for people in Darfur and on the other side of the border in the Chadian regions of Wadai and Biltine has emerged from a long and intertwined history that challenges thinking constrained to the territory of the nation state.

The Historical Chad/Sudan Border Region as a Field Shaped by Shifts in Power and Alliances

The frontier between Chad and Sudan existed long before the 1921 delimitation of national borders between the French, who had conquered Wadai in 1909, and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the colonial power in the Sudan from 1898 to 1956. Until that point in time, however, the border had never been clear-cut or static. All historical accounts explicitly mention the border region’s history as one of continuing conflict (Nachtigal 1971; Carbou 1912; Slatin 1896/1997). Integration occurred mainly through mutual imitation of hierarchical and military structures built upon Sudanic tradition and during sometimes brief and changing alliances.

The sultanates of Wadai and Darfur were similar in strength and size² and, for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they

² Kapteijns (1985: 13) dates the separation of the larger pre-Islamic Tunjur state, which comprised both Wadai and Darfur, to some time briefly after the rise of the Keira dynasty in Darfur, between 1600 and 1650. In this time, the

fought each other over allegiance, land, slaves or control of trade routes. Mutual territorial invasions were the rule until the late nineteenth century. Until the Turko-Egyptian invasion of Darfur in 1874, the people living between Wadai and Darfur had no choice but to side with one of these two most influential regional powers. But siding with either sultanate did not represent a permanent choice; loyalty was always contested whenever one of the two powers weakened. Shifts in alliances most often occurred when a faction of one group was dissatisfied with or competed against its leaders. In this situation the splinter group could be most successful if it looked to its leaders' enemies for support. The point is not that alliances and oppositions frequently changed in a setting marked by imminent rivalry, but rather that a historical view of the region reveals a striking parallel between the recent Darfur conflict and the historical development of the area. Vacillation between allying with and opposing regional or supra-regional powers becomes particularly evident in times of social rupture brought about, for instance, by the death of powerful rulers or by strong external interferences.

Impositions of Foreign Rule: Turko-Egyptian, Mahdist, Anglo-Egyptian and French (Re-)Conquests

Foreign rule was imposed on Darfur in 1874 by the Turko-Egyptian Empire. Some thirty years later, in 1909, Wadai was invaded by French colonial troops. However, the events unfolding after the Turko-Egyptian conquest of the area were of central concern to the socio-political balance of the greater region.

In the late eighteenth century, Darfur was at the peak of its power. It maintained its tributary kingdoms on the western fringes and expanded farther east into Kordofan.³ By 1821 the Turko-Egyptian Empire had established its rule over the Nile Valley and reconquered

overarching power of the Keira sultans was overthrown in the west by the Maba who became the ethnic core of the sultanate of Wadai. Both sultanates were Islamised as a result of the important role which the sultans and the central political institutions played in spreading Islam (see also Meier 1995: 32).

³ During this time, the capital of Darfur was moved from the mountain range of Jebel Marra to El-Fasher, a choice that might not seem convincing when considering Darfur's later borders, where El-Fasher became 'strangely off center' (Prunier 2005: 15).

Kordofan, forcing the sultan of Darfur to retreat to his former territories. At that time what is known today as the Sudan had no political existence. With the exception of the powerful Sultanates of Sennar to the east and Darfur to the west, the area south of Khartoum was stateless and only of limited interest to the Turko-Egyptian rulers. From the 1850s onwards, trade companies well-equipped with modern firearms started to raid the south from Khartoum onward to acquire slaves and ivory. The Turko-Egyptian armies as well as the trade companies initially circumvented the sultan's forces, thus avoiding further confrontation with Darfur. But their existence was soon noticed in Darfur.

It was at this juncture that a new phenomenon was introduced in Darfur, as in other areas where the central government of the Turko-Egyptian regime had little or no control: banditry. Khartoum was linked to the south, east and west through a structure of organised raids and the distribution of firearms, thus creating an overall 'culture of banditry', which – with similar and different characteristics – is still active today.⁴ In this form of rule, control over volatile areas is maintained by providing weapons to local groups, which then act as agents for the central regime. At the same time, the weapons find their way to all other groups through trade or theft, thus providing the grounds for new forms of conflict as well as a general increase in all forms of banditry.

In 1874 one of the king-like traders and slave raiders, Az-Zubayr Raḥma Maṣṣūr, caused a major rupture in Darfurian power and instigated what was later called the 'Times of Troubles' or 'Time of the Bandits'⁵ in Darfur's history. After a quarrel between Az-Zubayr and sultan Ibrāhīm of Darfur, Az-Zubayr's army killed the sultan and easily overwhelmed the outmoded Darfurian forces. With Darfur considerably weakened, the Turko-Egyptian army followed on the heels of Az-Zubayr's army, taking over administration and imposing heavy taxation. The followers of sultan Ibrāhīm went into hiding in the

⁴ See Beck 2003 and de Waal 2004 for accounts on how consecutive governments of Sudan used banditry structures to cause unrest and insecurity in an area or to counter insurgencies.

⁵ As Prunier notes, 'Umm Kwakiyya (lit. the mother of banditry) was the name given in Darfur to the period going from the conquest of Az-Zubayr Raḥma Maṣṣūr in 1874 to the fall of the Mahdiyya and the restoration of the Sultanate in 1898' (Prunier 2005: 168).

mountains of Jebel Marra to resist the new regime. Darfur's subjugation lasted through the reigns of several 'shadow sultans', and in 1883, the Mahdiyya⁶ reached Darfur after the Turko-Egyptian Empire was overthrown. Many of Darfur's former allies surrendered at this point to the Mahdī, while others changed alliance and joined their former enemy, the sultan of Wadai.

During the 'Times of Troubles', disorder was caused not only by the repeated attempts of the Mahdist forces to end the continuous resistance of the Fur. Kapteijns (1985: 62) characterised the instability and turmoil of that period on the one hand as physical, with soldiers of either side plundering villages and disrupting trade, and on the other hand as political, 'because the local rulers who had submitted to the new regime still had to reckon with a possible restoration of the sultanate, and kept considering and reconsidering their attitudes.' The Wadaian sultanate during this time became stronger and expanded further to the east. Wadai resisted expansion of the Mahdist regime into its territory with support of the Sanūsī brotherhood,⁷ a Sufi order, with which the sultanate had established strong bonds since the extension of trade connections to Central Africa and the Mediterranean after the mid-nineteenth century (Meier 1995: 33).

The increased overall instability and readiness to go to war caused the development of new socio-political changes. Large numbers of the Fur population sought refuge in the west, where most of them were enslaved either by the border sultanates or Wadai. Even those leaders that had first embraced the ideology of the Mahdiyya soon came to view the presence of the Mahdist armies as an unbearable burden. Whenever the soldiers passed through the countryside, they pillaged and confiscated anything they came across.

⁶ The Mahdiyya was 'a millenarian movement for the revival of Islam, or more particularly, for the restoration of the true Islamic community of the Prophet's days, at the end of time. It took the form of a *jihad* or holy war of independence against the Turko-Egyptian occupation and led to the establishment of an independent "Sudanese" state' (Kapteijns 1985: 73). Kapteijns maintains that the Mahdist Sudan was in many ways a successor state to the Turkiyya.

⁷ The Sanūsī order retained close control of trade routes by building *zāwāya* (singular *zāwīya*), which Prunier (2005: 170) depicts as a 'combination of religious school, traveller's hostel, monastery and fortress. The *zāwīya* of the Senussiyya brotherhood drew a network of strong points extending from Libya down to the northern part of today's Central African Republic, constituting a kind of quasi-state across the Sahara.'

In 1888, Abū Jummayza, a foreigner in his thirties who apparently came from Libya,⁸ proclaimed himself as a 'Son of Sanūsī' and managed to build up a large western front against the 'anṣār, the followers and armies of the Mahdiyya. This particular movement was described by Kapteijns, who detailed the possibilities and limits of alliance and opposition in the frontier zone during this phase of rapid change. Bearing certain distinctive similarities to the present situation in Darfur, the rebellion of Abū Jummayza, in the phase of its initial success, was able to reactivate old loyalties and mobilise cooperative alliances, overcoming traditional fears and feuds. Abū Jummayza apparently had seven sultanates on his side that had previously been fighting against and enslaving each other, among them the Tama, Qimr, Masalit, Zaghawa and Fur. Although Jummayza and his followers did not oppose the religious ideals introduced by the Mahdi, they revolted against what they perceived as foreign rule imposed on them by the Mahdi's successor, the *kalifa* ʿAbd Allāhi. The later failure of the movement and split of Abū Jummayza's alliance shows 'how the old competition and mutual distrust proved too persistent to be more than temporarily suppressed' (Kapteijns 1985: 83-84).

Before the Mahdist armies could react to the revolt, the Mahdist movement was overthrown by Anglo-Egyptian troops in 1898 during the re-conquest of the Sudan.⁹ They were defeated in the Mahdist capital of Omdurman, a newly erected city near Khartoum. The British re-installed the Darfur sultanate with sultan ʿAlī Dīnār¹⁰, under whom Darfur regained some of its former strength and power. At the same time, after the death of the Wadaian sultan Yussuf in 1898, Wadai fell into civil war over the question of who would be the rightful successor. Only after sultan Dud Murra gained the Wadaian throne in 1902 was peace partially restored. The French, however, proceeded rapidly from the western Lake Chad area and were concerned with fighting the

⁸ While Kapteijns (1985: 83-84) writes that people in Dar Masalit maintained that the man called Abū Jummayza had come from 'Libya', Burr and Collins (1999: 18) claim his origins lie in the border region itself, in Dar Tama, but refer to no sources supporting this claim.

⁹ For the Anglo-Egyptian era in the Sudan that started in the mid-nineteenth century, which was interrupted by the Mahdiyya and regained power in 1898, see Daly (1986, 1991).

¹⁰ See Theobald 1965 for an account of ʿAlī Dīnār's years as *sultan* of Darfur from 1898-1916, and O'Fahey and Spaulding 1974 for the history of Sudanic kingdoms.

economically powerful Sanūsīya, ousting uncooperative political leaders and installing puppet leaders. The battles against the French and the continuing internal power struggles finally forced Dud Murra to withdraw east into Dar Masalit.

To many outside observers, as Meier (1995: 142) notes, the defeat of Wadai symbolised the last brick in the construction of a French Africa from Dakar and Algeria to the Congo. The French *œuvre de civilisation* was completed with the fall of this 'last barbaric bastion', but the area proved difficult to control. With Dud Murra fighting the French together with the Masalit and the Tama from the east, many of the border sultanates like Zaghawa, Tama, Masalit, Sila and Runga submitted to Darfur's authority. The French military in Wadai was interested in further expanding its realm of influence. However, Darfurian opposition was a problem that could not to be solved by military force, because by the early twentieth century, the demarcation of a border between the French colony and the Sudan of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium had become a political issue between Paris, London and Cairo. Moreover, a large part of the French army was unexpectedly beaten by the united followers of Dud Murra and the Masalit sultan Tāj ad-Dīn during an 'inspection' tour into Dar Masalit in 1910. But by 1912, an overwhelming response by the French military ended resistance along the border, and Dud Murra was exiled.

Colonial Times and Beyond: Different Conditions for the Independent States

During colonial rule the border between the former sultanates, which had formerly been an in-between zone, became a dividing line. Although the people living in the area were still freely crossing the border in both directions, they started to think in terms of belonging to national states in addition to their various regional, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliations. Colonial policies of the French and Anglo-Egyptian administrations differed considerably in the ways power structures were imposed, but not in their overall principles of rule. While the French drew the lines between their administrative areas or subdivisions rather arbitrarily, the British system of indirect rule¹¹ was

¹¹ The British colonial policy of Indirect Rule is based on the ideas developed by Frederick Lugard at the beginning of the twentieth century. Prunier's

based on the traditional system of the *dār*, that is, the customary lands of larger ethnic entities, which the British perceived as being distinct from each other. Neglecting the above mentioned mixture of populations in the various *dār* of the border region, the British awarded territories to single groups, thereby forcing people to accept British views of territorial authority.¹²

They introduced the 'native administration'¹³ system, which allowed newly installed paramount chiefs to perform certain judicial functions and allocate land to residents and newcomers, although this did not include land ownership rights. Problems with this system became apparent when arable land grew scarce due to ecological changes. Under the original division, for instance, most of the nomadic Arab population of the region¹⁴ had not been assigned a *dār*. In the early to mid-1980s, after several periods of severe Sahelian droughts, this lack of land became a source of conflict and violence in Darfur, then and up to now.

French colonial rule was based on structurally reforming the sultanates, mainly by depriving the former elites of their power and setting up local structures with *chefs de village* and *chefs de canton* at the lowest administrative levels. At this level, the local chiefs held judicial and police functions, collected taxes and supervised public works. As Meier (1995: 151) states, they were 'men for everything in

(2005: 29) comments grasp different facets of this policy: 'Indirect Rule' could be considered either as a prime example of racism or alternatively as the most culturally respectful of possible colonial policies. In summary, the British should exercise their power only through the agency of local traditional authorities which would respect native culture, avoid affronting local sensibilities, and introduce changes gently and in harmony with the local order. Opponents of this philosophy called it a recipe for stagnation and for building a two-tiered society in which the natives, on the pretext of cultural integrity, were marginalized from the benefits of the modern world which the colonialists could monopolize for their own advantage.'

¹² El-Battahani (2005: 12) highlights the fact that during British indirect rule, land was allocated in favour of the 'larger tribes', often incorporating smaller groups into larger units against their will, thereby causing new forms of conflict over independence between groups along minority/majority lines.

¹³ See Azzain 2004 for indigenous and colonial practices of administration and conflict management.

¹⁴ Some of today's Arab populations in Darfur can reasonably be considered as 'early settlers'. The southern Darfurian Rizaiqat, for instance, date their own claim to land or *dār* from the times of their first settlement, while others, like the northern Rizaiqat were never allocated a *dār* of their own, which has created enormous tensions over the centuries (Flint and de Waal 2005: 41-42).

the administration'. Many of them felt subordinated to the French regime, their power barely extending beyond the local level. Whereas Wadai bore up under one of the 'heaviest' impositions of foreign rule in French colonial history, Darfur, on the other side of the border, remained under comparatively 'light' British control. Although they did not enforce their rule as strongly as their French neighbours, the British policy could, at the same time, justifiably be criticised as being gravely neglectful. Prunier (2005: 32) notes that

economic and social underdevelopment contained the seeds of future conflicts which would eventually be much worse than the simple criminal cases or problems of pasture and well management that the tribal administration sponsored by the Condominium authorities had had to deal with.

Thus both colonial regimes imposed substantial changes in the administrative structures concerning rules, justice, land tenure and other issues. There were however differences between the two colonial regimes in both their methods and their outcomes.

The independent states of Chad and Sudan – Chad became independent in 1960 and Sudan in 1956 – differed thus in their internal structures but had comparable problems. Today people in both countries tend to be nostalgic about colonial times when conflicts between groups seemed to be more under control.¹⁵ When transmitting their power and ruling positions to African officials, both colonial regimes, however, tended to concentrate only on a small part of the population of each country.

The British, when transferring governmental power to Sudanese rulers, continued to follow existing patterns of authority and conferred all powerful positions to the northern Muslim elites, thereby solidifying Muslim domination in the country. After the British left Khartoum, it was these elites that stayed in power – and have done so throughout changing regimes. In Chad, the French policy of assimila-

¹⁵ See Beck (2003) for an account of how colonial Sudan maintained a certain control of its peripheral areas, while consecutive postcolonial governments increasingly relied on a system of supporting local militias, which led to lack of control. In Chad, people reminisced about the order French rule had brought about, which afterwards was never achieved again to that extent.

tion relied on the people from the country's south, mainly from the Sara sedentary farming community, who accepted Christian faith and teaching and the French curricula more readily than the northern Chadian Muslims, who not only resisted Christian education but also closer cooperation with the colonial regime in general. With all formerly powerful Muslim empires considerably weakened, if not ended by the French, the first Chadian president Tombalbaye emerged from the Sara group, whose people took over most positions in the government, administration, private sector and military during the first decade of Chadian independence.

This first independent Chadian government lasted fifteen years, although there was already considerable resistance against the president by 1966.¹⁶ Felix Malloum, another southerner, toppled Tombalbaye in 1975, and in 1979 the first member of the northern Chadian guerrillas, Goukouni Weddeye, who received strong support from Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, took over the presidency. Since then, the presidency as well as all senior government and military positions have remained in the hands of northern and Muslim Chadians from different ethnic origins. Although southern Chadians still hold many positions in the public sector, including banking, education, and non-governmental and international organisations, this change of power from southern to northern Chad altered the face of the country and excluded the south from political decision-making processes.

In both countries, revenues from natural resources,¹⁷ as well as key positions, are distributed amongst the small clique of the ruling elite, and development throughout the countries is gravely neglected. With all this being the case, it must be said that the Sudanese civil wars, particularly after the renewed outbreak in 1983, were characterised by overall cruelty and terror not experienced in the Chadian case, at least not since the time of Hissein Habré.¹⁸ Among factors that divide

¹⁶ See Buijtenhuijs (1978, 1987) for detailed accounts of the Frolinat (Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad) rebellions in Chad.

¹⁷ Sudan has produced oil since 1999 in cooperation mainly with Malaysia, China and India; Chad since 2003 with a consortium of American and Malaysian, and more recently Chinese, companies. See Kok 1992, Verney 1999, Gagnon and Ryle 2001, HRW 2003, Gary and Karl 2003, Gary and Reisch 2005, Pegg 2005, Behrends 2008, Reyna 2011 and Behrends (forthcoming) for detailed information on oil in Chad and Sudan.

¹⁸ The times before and during Hissein Habré's rule signify the most violent part of post-independence Chadian history. With frequent changing of sides, first

the north and the south in the neighbouring states are religion and economics¹⁹ – with oil, as the most profitable resource, being found in the southern parts of both countries, but exploited by the ruling northern groups. The British transfer of power to the already powerful northern elite in Sudan helped enforce this group's already long existing perception that the non-Muslim southern Sudanese as well as the Muslim sedentary populations of parts of northern Sudan were *zurqa* – black – and thus potential slaves, to be excluded from participation in the exclusive circles of national rule (Duffield 2001; El-Tom 2005).

Today, characteristic features of the Sudan are its strong turn towards fundamentalist Islam with the ascendancy of President Omar al-Bashir's NIF (National Islamic Front) government in 1989, and the government's continuing manipulation of ethnic differences. The government exploited these differences for proxy warfare against what is now South Sudan, by arming one group against its direct neighbours in order to maintain political office by weakening resistance and preventing alliances, and thus also keeping control over oil fields and other economic factors. After the secession of South Sudan in 2011, fighting for territory and access to oil continued – both between and within the two states (Rottenburg, Komey and Ille 2011).

Chad's most striking features are its extreme poverty, and its continuing lack of basic infrastructure for health, education and economic development, in spite of a relatively calm phase after Idriss Déby's

as prime minister under the three-year rule of the southern General Malloum, then together with Goukouni Weddeye and Libyan help against Malloum, later against Weddeye and Libya with the help of Egypt, the Sudan, the US and later France, his rule and the war against Libya brought the country into almost fifteen years of constant military operations and grave insecurity. Thousands of people fled the country, but many thousands were also killed and tortured by his regime. In 1990 he was overthrown by one of his former army commanders, the present president of Chad, Idriss Déby. As of 1990 Habré lives in exile in Senegal awaiting his imminent trial before the Extraordinary African Chambers. On July 2, 2013 he has been placed in pre-trial detention. (<http://www.hrw.org/habre-case>, accessed 30 June 2014).

¹⁹ Although oil constitutes the most profitable resource in both countries, the southern areas also hold the potential for higher revenues in agricultural and cotton cultivation. While in Chad all cultivation is concentrated in the south – an inheritance from French colonial rule, when the south was even named 'le Tchad utile' compared to the northern 'Tchad inutile' –, the Sudanese regime only developed commercial cultivation schemes in the northern and central part of the country for fear of giving the south too much asset-based power (see Duffield 2001: 205).

overthrow of Hissein Habré in his 1990 coup d'état. With the change of power from a southern to a northern elite group in Chad, today's subjugation of the south takes on a different character than in the Sudan, where the south only now, after its secession, has any possibility, besides by rebellion, of influencing national politics or public and institutional life.

Southern Chadian rebellion never had the impact that the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had in the Sudan. Still, Chad remains strongly affected by the severe civil wars of the 1970s and 1980s. The extreme fractiousness and internal fighting of the FROLINAT (Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad) guerrilla movement, and Libyan claims to the northern Aouzou Strip²⁰ – coupled with Muammar al-Gaddafi's political interests in Chad and the involvement of the US and France in the Chadian civil war – leave the impression that the state has completely neglected the population and left the administration of public services to local warlords and rebel armies. Today, the state in Chad has managed to establish military control over much of its territory. And while an Arab-African 'racial' divide is not significant in Chad, the fact that the national military consists exclusively of the president's Zaghawa ethnicity seems not only to be at the heart of the population's grievances, but also accounts for the still ongoing power struggles within this ethnic group over the national presidency.

The Chad/Sudan Border Region Today as a Site of Integration and Conflict

Although the Chad/Sudan border has become a clear-cut dividing line, it continues to display distinctive traits of both cross-border integration and cross-border conflict. A characteristic feature of integration in this region is the long-standing orientation towards the Sudan by people living in both countries, related to the colonial disempowerment of Wadaian elites. After Wadaian influence largely faded from the frontier zone, Wadai's former tributaries and depen-

²⁰ Gaddafi's revolutionary thoughts not only centred on his idea of an Arab corridor into 'Black Africa' based on feelings of cultural Arab supremacy, but he was also fighting for control of the Aouzou Strip, a piece of supposedly uranium-rich land bordering Chad, which Mussolini had claimed during the Italian occupation of Libya in 1938 against the border treaty signed by France and Italy in 1935 (see Burr and Collins 1999).

dent sultanates were left wanting a larger ally. Neither the colonial state, nor the post-colonial southern Chadian regime, nor the subsequent rebel factions and warlords that ruled Wadai until 1990 provided the population with a trustworthy successor to the former sultanate. As a result, by the late 1920s, people from the Chadian side east of the former Wadai Sultanate were migrating into British-ruled territory because of 'a tightening up of administration in general and a drastic tax collection campaign in Wadai' (Kapteijns 1985: 238).

During this time, west Sudanese labour migration to the Nile Valley began on a larger scale. Safer roads and the desire for tea, sugar and factory-made cloth created a demand for hard currency, which could be earned in the agricultural schemes of maize cultivation in regions like Gedarif or the Gezira. As the ensuing Chadian regimes left the population on the Chad/Sudan border feeling less and less well governed, many people preferred to migrate to the Sudanese side. Whereas the influence of local elites was reduced in Chad, the former elites in colonial Darfur upheld their supremacy, controlling landownership rights and governance in their areas.²¹ However, leadership of the Fur, the largest ethnic group in the area, and their claims to land in the most fertile area of central Darfur was increasingly contested. While people migrated for reasons of governance, access to currency and goods, and religious affiliation, the characteristic features of conflict in the border region are based on tensions and open disputes over the legitimacy of land claims, but also over differential access to the central government, which results in political and economic disparities.

The 1980s mark a major rupture after independence in Chad and Sudan. Overall insecurity led to civil war, ultimately caused by a triple catastrophe. First, severe droughts were coupled with the failure of both national governments to manage the emerging food and water shortage; second, the Chadian civil war spread across the border; and third, the Libyan-sponsored invasion into the border zone transformed the region into a *de facto* Libyan territory during much of the 1980s

²¹ Even today, the sultan of Dar Masalit, residing in El-Geneina, the capital of Western Darfur, wields a colonial document guaranteeing him the right to secede from the rest of the Sudan on the premise of a quasi-autonomy granted to him during Anglo-Egyptian rule (personal communication by Ibrahim Adam Ahmed, N'Djamena 2000).

(Prunier 2005: 70). It was during this time that international involvement, the impositions of both central governments, and internal opposition intensified in an unprecedented manner that led to the current crisis. Marchal (2004: 49) observed that these elements individually did not have the potential to destabilise the situation so radically, but together their effect was multiplied and the situation escalated.

Culmination of Factors Leading to an Intensification of Warfare in the 1980s

Since the 1970s the ecological deterioration caused by droughts – particularly in the more arid zones of the northern border region – has caused more people to move south and to stay there longer than they normally would during their usual phases of transhumance. As a result, tensions between farmers and herders of different groups in central Darfur intensified. These tensions coincided in the early 1980s with the appointment of the first regionally recruited government of Darfur since the times of sultan ʿAlī Dīnār. President Nimeiri installed this government after continuous protests by Khartoum-based Darfurians that their region was neglected by the central government. But Aḥmad Ibrāhīm Diraige (an ethnic Fur), the appointed governor, and his deputy Maḥmūd Jamāʿ (an ethnic Zaghawa) soon faced irresolvable problems in Darfur. Mounting ethnic tensions did not at first represent the most pressing and central problem. But Sharif Harir (1994: 161), in his account of the phases leading up to large-scale civil war in Darfur during the 1980s, argues that the local government, which appointed positions according to ethnic background (and eventually took different sides in conflicts) did not help but rather aggravated the situation, regardless of the integrity of individual politicians (Marchal 2004: 51; Prunier 2005: 50). Without any help from President Nimeiri's government in providing food and water to reduce tensions and save the population from starvation, Diraige threw in the towel and left Darfur in 1983.

Ecological deterioration intensified competition over increasingly scarce arable land. During the Sahelian droughts of the 1970s and 1980s that culminated in the 1983-84 famine, an influx of groups from all sides into the more fertile central Jebel Marra area of the Fur caused

rising competition over access to land and water. Although the Fur usually received their guests with hospitality and the sharing of resources during normal transhumant influx as well as other immigrations, the demands of all incoming groups could not be met. By the end of the 1980s, the intensification of struggle took the form of a racist war, in which different groups started fighting against each other with modern weaponry, burning villages and killing indiscriminately.²²

These conflicts were greatly aggravated by the additionally disturbing and destructive presence of Hissein Habré's Chadian troops in Darfur. Habré was preparing to stage a coup against his opponent, Goukouni Weddeye, then the president of Chad. In Darfur, Sudan's President Nimeiri backed him, but the US, Saudi Arabia and Egypt also provided Habré with military aid (Harir 1994: 164; Buijtenhuijs 1991: 132). After his successful coup in 1982, Habré took the Chadian Zaghawa, who had helped him in Darfur on his way to power, into his ethnic alliance ruling Chad.

At the same time, the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi feared losing influence in Chad after his protégé Goukouni Weddeye was overthrown. Thus, he started to look for allies who were not represented in Habré's government. In accordance with his ideas about pan-Arabism and Arab supremacy, Gaddafi began recruiting Arab groups from Darfur and Wadai to build up opposition against Habré. He found a willing partner in Acheikh ibn Oumar,²³ the leader of the Chadian rebel group CDR (*Conseil Démocratique Révolutionnaire*), who was

²² The *janjawīd* militia, mostly made up of Arab groups from northern Darfur and Wadai, emerged during these years of warfare in the area, when fighting had been influenced by outside involvement and taken on racist and ideological leanings, heavily laden with 'tribal bigotry' (Harir 1994: 165).

²³ Members of the *Conseil Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (CDR) were 'Chadians of Arab origin, most originating in Ouaddaï Prefecture or Batha Prefecture, with close ties to Libya and receptive to some of the ideological precepts of Muammar Gaddafi. After the death of its founder, Acyl Ahmat, the CDR was headed by Acheikh ibn Oumar. [...] Believed to number up to 3,000 at its peak in the early 1980s, the CDR dwindled to fewer than 1,000 adherents before it was battered [...] in 1987' (Library of Congress. n.d. Appendix B – Chad. Principal Armed Factions, 1975-87. http://www.country-data.com/frd/cs/chad/td_appnb.html, accessed 3 August 2013).

Acyl Ahmat Ashbakh had been in exile from Libya since 1976. He gathered Arab groups on the Chadian side from among the Mahamid Arabs, who shared with him Gaddafi's ideological ideas of a grand Arab nation. The name and fierce rule of Acyl is well remembered among the Chad/Sudan border population as one of the warlords that rendered the area highly insecure during the 1980s years of war and famine (personal communication).

ready to lead an alliance of Arab groups, mainly from northern Wadai, and provide them with abundant weapons. This meant that on top of the conflicts arising from drought and famine, proxy warfare between Chad and Libya was fought out in the border region.

When the Sudanese President Nimeiri, who had been supporting Habré, fell in 1985, military hindrance to Libyan recruitment of soldiers in Darfur was also removed. Thus, Libya's massive supply of weapons poured into the conflict area at the same time that Chad-based Arab opposition groups and their cattle fled Chad because of revenge attacks by Habré's soldiers. They escaped into the fertile Darfurian Jebel Marra region because the mountainous landscape made it difficult for Chadian government expeditionary forces to follow them. The new Sudanese president, Sadiq al-Mahdi, who re-placed Nimeiri after elections held in 1986, did not resist Libyan presence in the border area, nor did he prevent the influx of weapons to Gaddafi's newfound allies.²⁴

Another factor amplifying the intensity of warfare was the renewed rebellion of the southern Sudanese SPLA under John Garang against the northern Sudanese government in 1983. In 1985 Sadiq al-Mahdi, searching for a 'cheap'²⁵ way to counter the SPLA and prevent their expansion into Darfur, armed the *muraḥilīn*, a group of fighters recruited from the southern Darfurian Rizaïqat, and installed them as militias against the SPLA. Concurrently, the Fur, who already had '*fort à faire*' with the large scale Zaghawa penetration of Fur territory from the north, were also attacked by these Rizaïqat militias from the southern side (Marchal 2004: 45).

By 1987 Habré, who rightly feared a coup against him from the Sudanese side, armed willing partners most opposed to his enemies in the region: the non-Arab Fur, Masalit and other central and western Darfurian sedentary populations that felt neglected by all sides. At the same time, the Sudanese Zaghawa, initially not too involved in the Chadian conflict, mobilised opposition against Habré by siding with his opponent, Idriss Déby. Déby originates from the Chadian Zaghawa

²⁴ Sadiq al-Mahdi had been hosted by Tripoli during the years of Nimeiri's reign and maintained ties with Muammar Gaddafi after his return to the Sudan.

²⁵ See Alex de Waal's (2004) frequently quoted article in the *London Review of Books*, 'Counter-Insurgency on the Cheap,' which aptly characterises the Government of Sudan's method of fighting rebellion for more than twenty years.

Bideyat and promised influence and position to his supporters. In 1989 the Sudanese president Sadiq al-Mahdi was overthrown by a group of middle rank military officers led by Omar al-Bashir. Al-Bashir, who in contrast to Sadiq was against Habré, did not hinder Déby and the Zaghawa's preparation for the coup in Darfur,²⁶ which with Libyan help they successfully executed in early December 1990.

With Déby's takeover in Chad and Al-Bashir as the new president of the Sudan, warfare in both countries eased almost immediately. The Zaghawa, who, as Marchal (2004: 46) put it, did not react 'too modestly' after their triumph in N'Djamena, raided parts of Wadai to regain the areas that had been brought under control by the Libyan-backed Arab warlord Acheikh ibn Oumar during the years of war and chaos. Marchal suggests that the Chadian Arab refugees to the Sudan, who fled during the Zaghawa campaigns, became some of the later recruits of the renewed *janjawīd* militias in northern Darfur after the 2003 insurgency. But the Fur and Masalit, which had been supported by Habré towards the end of his regime, fell from favour. Neither Déby nor Al-Bashir was willing to support what they perceived as either Habré's allies or the opponents of Arabism respectively.

During the early 1990s, socio-political development differed in Chad and Sudan. In Chad, the Zaghawa military, together with the new regime's administration, took firmer control of the whole country, and by 1996, Déby held 'democratic' elections. Conflict in Darfur slowed but did not cease.

The new Sudanese government instigated a reform in the region's Native Administration in 1995 (Tubiana, Tanner and Abdul-Jalil 2012: 14) that attributed positions formerly held by local chiefs and elders to the Arab and Zaghawa allies of the government, groups that had not previously held political offices in the area. This move reduced the authorities of the three largest landholding groups in Darfur – the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit – to those of mere tribal chiefs. Due to

²⁶ Sudanese help for Déby was more laissez-faire than active. At this time the Sudanese army was highly involved in overthrowing Mengistu in Ethiopia. Déby was granted the right to take what he wanted and to freely move in the region. General Al-Tijānī Adam Al-Ṭāhir, a close confidant of Omar al-Bashir, who also belonged to the ruling junta in Khartoum, had gone to school with Déby in Kornoy and played a leading role in this. It should also be mentioned that many in Khartoum were against Déby's presence in Darfur and were ready to reach an agreement with Habré in the fall of 1990 when continuing attacks on Darfurians caused more and more casualties.

tensions resulting from this process, fighting broke out again, first between Masalit and Arabs, causing tens of thousands to flee into neighbouring Chad. The central government did not intervene in the conflicts, and its total neglect of the area combined with an overt favouring of the Arab population brought together all non-Arab factions in the region even though before they had been opposed to each other over land and access to resources. Thus, the Zaghawa of northern Darfur and the central Darfurian Fur found themselves allied, despite their fierce opposition during the conflicts of the 1980s. After a phase of relative calm, those groups in Darfur, deprived by the state and with a common claim to landownership and rulership, allied against their common opponent – the Government of Sudan.

Local Perceptions of the Relations between ‘Arabs’ and ‘Africans’ in Chad and Sudan

In the following discussion of data collected during my field research in 2000 and 2001, before the Darfur and Chad rebellions, two points shall be underscored: first, the disrupting influence of the successive national governments of Chad and Sudan on the rather flexible structures of alliance and opposition that historically prevailed in the border region; and second, the subsequent hardening of differences along racial and ethnic lines, which can be observed to varying degrees in the two states in accordance with their governmental politics.

This section provides a glimpse into the time period shortly before the outbreak of the 2003 rebellion, that is, the phase during or directly after the confrontations in Dar Masalit that resulted from the constitutional reform mentioned above.²⁷ My informants were mainly Masalit and Arabs from various large families, who considered themselves as Chadian residents or as refugees from Sudan who had recently moved to / returned to Chad. After the above mentioned administrative reforms in Darfur, Masalit in higher positions in the local government and the military in El-Geneina were replaced by northern Sudanese citizens. People saw the conflict starting in towns and soon after sweeping into rural areas, where the attacks on Masalit villages

²⁷ Two teachers, refugees from El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur in Dar Masalit, also gave me a detailed handwritten account (2001) of the events preceding the renewed outbreak of violence.

reached a first peak in 1998, causing several thousand people to flee to the Chadian side.²⁸

Although I was aware of the increasingly racial confrontations on the Sudanese side of the border before my fieldwork, I was surprised to find little evidence of these problems just a couple hundred meters from the physical border (the area of the Wadi Asoungha riverbed) in Masalit and Arab villages on the Chadian side²⁹. The villages were situated only short distances apart. Thus, Arabs and Masalit fetched water from the same nearby *wādī*, and families from both villages had known each other for generations. The young Masalit women were particularly familiar with their age mates from the other villages and knew, for example, the interior of Arab houses.³⁰ After the influx of refugees from the Sudan – who at that stage were mainly integrated into existing villages or given land outside a village (refugee camps had not yet been established) – tensions between the groups rose. But, these tensions seemed to be a long way from causing outright fighting. Rather, both Arabs and Masalit farmers and traders complained about attacks by members of the Chadian army. The common antipathy of the population was therefore geared towards ‘the Zaghawa’, the term standing for Chadian military and police in general. Indeed, during the months of my stay, frequent cattle theft and deadly attacks on traders returning from the market were witnessed, but people did not report these instances to the police. As one informant put it: ‘If you are killed,

²⁸ In 1998, the UN Commission for Refugees opened an office in Abéché, assisting refugees together with the World Food Programme. Already in 1984, the UNHCR had intervened from the Sudanese side. In the memories of the people with whom I talked, the 1984 famine had been one of the worst phases in their lives. Not only had they been living in constant insecurity and danger from Habré’s or Acheikh ibn Oumar’s soldiers raiding villages and killing people at random, but their harvests after years of bad rainfall were not sufficient to support their families. Almost everybody had fled to Sudan; villages on the Chadian side were deserted, and whole village structures completely changed when people returned. Many of those who had fled the Chadian side in the 1980s had planned never to return, and, despite the insecure situation in Darfur, only returned during the clashes caused by the governmental changes just before 2000. Compare accounts of this emergency intervention by UNHCR 1984, Maxwell 1986, Doornbos 1987, Ruiz 1987, and de Waal (1988, 1989).

²⁹ Apart from the larger towns like the border town of Adré, Arabs and Masalit do not live together in the same villages.

³⁰ Although more or less alike from the outside, Arab houses displayed a rich collection of pots and leather bags as well as, in some cases, large beds decorated with pillows and blankets. Rural Masalit houses normally were not decorated, and pots were stored in kitchen houses, but not on ‘display’.

they will say he was a bandit; if you killed him, they will say he was a military man,' thus resulting in impunity for those who committed the crimes.³¹

In the villages, gruesome bedtime stories were told about how Masalit were killed by their own people if they continued to cooperate or do business with the Arabs. In actual practice, however, apart from barter between Masalit and Arab nomads who passed through occasionally, Arabs from the neighbouring villages occasionally entered Masalit villages on foot or on horseback to greet friends. Masalit farmers worked for salaries in the few fields some of the Arabs had started to cultivate, and Arab camels were rented by the Masalit to collect their harvest. Cattle found spoiling the harvest in the fields were caught by the farmers and put into a kraal, from where Arab women would pick them up and pay a fine to the village chief for the damage. Children often teased each other and sometimes fights would break out between them, but these problems seemed to be easy enough to resolve at the village level.

These accounts of everyday activities were mirrored in the case of an old Masalit farmer I visited in his melon field close to the *wādī*. He told me he had to guard his field every day until sunset, because then the Arab children herding goats and sheep would pass by his orchard, and he feared they would let the animals enter the fields or steal his melons. When the children came by, I saw them stand by the thorn bush fence, laughing and waving their hands, and Abderahman, the old man, went to give them a couple of melons to share on the spot.

Friendly behaviour of individuals of different ethnicities does not guarantee against fighting between groups or tightening of ethnic identities that transforms into collective hatred. But tensions like those reported from Darfur, at least at that point in time, were not observed, in spite of the close proximity of differing neighbouring groups on the Chadian side. Masalit refugees from the Sudan, who had seen their villages burnt and all their belongings taken by 'Arab horsemen', confirmed that their long-time Arab neighbours had not taken part in the attacks. However, they suspected them of having hosted strangers, who then attacked their villages after having spied on them to gain information for a raid. In retaliation, Masalit farmers counterattacked

³¹ Accounts of attacks around Abéché in 2005 have publicly been attributed to military from the Zaghawa Bideyat; see, e.g., <http://www.alwihdainfo.com>.

their former Arab neighbours, causing a good number of Arab herders to take refuge in Chad as well. They were putting into practice the lyrics of Mubasak, who at the time was very popular, singing about cattle theft and how the Masalit were standing by and watching their belongings being taken. 'Don't watch them from afar, take up your white arms and fight,' he sang in a melancholy tone, and the young and old Masalit men would sing along.

From the information gathered in the field, it seems that Arab groups started to settle in the area around the Chadian garrison town of Adré on a permanent basis during the 1940s and 1950s, when land for herding in their own home area around Arada in northern Chad became scarce. The land for their settlements was given to them by the local Masalit, but not, as the latter emphasised, for good. Fearing repulsion as a consequence of the conflicts on the Sudanese side, the Arabs in some villages had the land declared theirs by the ruling sub-prefect, justifying their claims with their Chadian citizenship.³² The Arab settlements looked similar to those of the Masalit, but they were often fewer and larger due to the fact that different Arab 'tribes'³³ shared a common space and lived slightly separated from each other in different quarters of a village headed by several 'tribal' and 'village quarter' chiefs, none of them responsible for the whole settlement (see Yalçın-Heckmann, Behrends and Leutloff-Grandits 2003).

One of the most significant differences between Masalit and Arabs that I observed was the free movement of Arabs into Sudanese territory. Arab women with their small children frequently entered Darfur on donkeys to buy and sell in the El-Geneina market, a venue that had once been very attractive to the Masalit as well. But, in contrast to their Arab neighbours, the Masalit did not dare cross the border any longer, except for very rare and secretive visits to their former houses and fields. Most certainly, they still claimed ownership of their land in the Sudan, a fact they demonstrated by harvesting fields immediately around or on the grounds of their former houses. The Arab groups I met remained in Chad throughout the recent warring, and they – as many other Arab groups in the region – have not been involved in the

³² The Zaghawa and Arabs on the Sudanese side adopted a similar strategy after the ecological degradation in the 1980s (Harir 1994).

³³ The Arab groups living in the villages of my research were Mahariye, Walad Zeid and Naddja, all claiming to come from the northern part of Chad.

violence themselves, although some of the younger men may have crossed the border to join one side of the fighting.³⁴

In conclusion, in relation to today's perceptions of 'Arab'-'African' relations in Chad and Sudan, the facts indicate that discrepancies result from the differing positions of the two national governments concerning this point. When Déby was preparing his coup d'état to topple the regime of Hissein Habré in Chad, he found initial support from the Arab 'people of Acyl'³⁵ and from Libya. But neither this nor other events in the past led to an overall ideology of Arab supremacy in Chad. People in the Chad/Sudan border region remember that during the times when Acyl and later Acheikh ibn Oumar ruled as warlords over Wadai and Biltine in the 1980s, Arab soldiers enjoyed superior positions. Soon, however, the Arab warlords and their followers were reduced to the level of the rest of the population after Déby's successful coup in 1990. Their influential positions, military command and impunity more or less transferred to the Chadian Zaghawa.

In contrast to the Chadian situation, national politics and external influences from neighbouring regimes in Sudan have, over time, substantially altered relations between Arab and non-Arab groups, particularly in Darfur. Today, the Sudanese government promotes Arab domination over the non-Arab population of the region. Thus, conflicts do not arise between groups with opposing interests, e.g., in relation to land, but between groups when one side is guaranteed impunity and full support of the government, while the other side is severely disadvantaged.

Conclusion

The historical trajectories laid out in this paper reveal the continuity of regional alliances and oppositions on the Chad/Sudan border and demonstrate the ruptures brought about by destructive manifestations of successive governmental regimes in both countries and in Libya, which have resulted in an enduring intensification of violence and

³⁴ Young Arab men are also said to have participated in the rebel groups that formed against the Government of Sudan.

³⁵ Accounts of Acyl's influence in Chad are given in Brandily 1984 and Buijtenhuijs 1991.

warfare. The structure of flexibility that historically characterised the border region was interrupted first by the colonial border and later by different national influences.

Historically, different groups had different political strategies in Darfur. The opposition of the Fur and of others to 'outside regimes' already existed at the end of the nineteenth century during the period of Zubayr and later the Mahdiyya. Meanwhile the Zaghawa at that time, and later various Arab groups, began to build up stronger ties with the central regime, which are still visible today. The first part of the paper, following Lidwien Kapteijns' (1985) historical account of the border region, showed how in 1888, at a point of overall crisis, different adversarial local groups effectively united against a common enemy – the Mahdist regime under ʿAlī ʿAbd Allāhī, the Mahdī's successor – under the leadership of a young man, Abū Jummayza, with whom they drove off the Mahdist forces together.

Recently, different local groups have united to fight the Sudanese government. Whereas the attacks of various Sudanese rebel movements were surprisingly successful in the beginning, their situation today might best be described by what Kapteijns (1985: 83-84) said about the final stages of the historical uprising under Abū Jummayza in 1888. She said differences that historically developed between members of different groups inside the movements – also related to their ethnic background – seem to be 'too persistent to be permanently suppressed'. One of the obvious differences today, as compared to the times when a great 'tribal' alliance fought against the Mahdist regime, is that strong allies such as the Darfurian and Wadaian empires no longer exist on the regional level and are therefore sought elsewhere.

'Trying to find powerful allies' could be a fitting headline for the conflict in Darfur as well as the most recent refugee movements involving former rebels and gold miners, in which the constant negotiating and renegotiating of who is on whose side seems to be the overarching characteristic. In a landscape with such a variety of rebel groups, militias, governmental forces and international agencies, strategic alignment and realignment has become a permanent process. In addition to the constant reconfigurations of alliances amongst the local groups, the new allies of Darfur's rebels and militias can be found in the various regional diasporas, among individuals within national and international governments, in rebel formations across national bor-

ders, among international military services, and also in the arms trade. Each party to one of these alliances has its own – and often internally conflicting – interests in the events on the ground. This volatility explains why every step towards appeasement complicates the situation.

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Whose Land? Disentangling Border Claims in Sudan

Douglas H. Johnson

Land has become a major issue of contention in twenty-first century Sudan. Contestation over land ownership and rights to the use of land lie at the heart of conflicts in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains (Flint and de Waal 2008; Komey 2010), as well as in relation to the still undemarcated boundary between Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan (Johnson 2009, 2010a, 2010b). While many of these conflicts are of recent origin, mediation often involves an investigation of historical claims. But can historical research settle such claims within Sudan's politically charged atmosphere? I summarise here border research I conducted in different parts of Sudan, separated by a quarter of a century: the first being the Gaawar Nuer - Ghol and Nyareweng Dinka boundary and the second being the Abyei boundary dispute between the Missiriyya and Ngok Dinka.

The Nuer-Dinka Tribal Boundary

The Nuer-Dinka boundary in what is now Jonglei State of the Republic of South Sudan was long contested. Throughout the nineteenth century there had been a steady encroachment of Nuer communities on the territory east of the Bahr el-Jebel, absorbing and displacing the indigenous Dinka. This movement was partially observed by nineteenth-century explorers, merchants and administrators travelling along the Bahr el-Jebel and Bahr el-Zeraf (Selim 1842; Lejean 1865; Marno 1873, 1874; Gordon 1881). The British officers of the incoming Anglo-Egyptian administration at the turn of the century documented the outcome of such encroachment, with many mixed settlements of Nuer and Dinka living along the Sobat and Zeraf valleys, and Dinka communities scattered inland south of the Gaawar between the Duk ridge and Bor (Sparkes 1899; Wilson 1903a, 1903b, 1905; Liddell 1904; Matthews 1907).

With the administrative partition of Upper Nile Province into Upper Nile and Mongalla provinces in 1906, there was a perceived need to demarcate not only the provincial boundary between the two, but the tribal boundary between the Gaawar and Dinka. This was first attempted in 1909 (Struvé 1909), with periodic adjustments and confirmations into the 1930s (Wauhope 1913; Coriat 1925/1993, 1931/1993).

When I carried out research in the region between 1975 and 1982, I found that I had a variety of sources on which to draw: the nineteenth-century exploration literature, whose observations were confined mainly to the river routes of the region; the early twentieth-century administrative record reprinted in the Sudan Intelligence Reports,¹ which began to record more substantial accounts about the interior; administrative reports still accessible in the provincial headquarters in Malakal, or preserved in the National Records Office (NRO) in Khartoum; the detailed geographical and environmental reports of the late-Condominium Jonglei Investigation Team (JIT 1954); and considerable oral testimony from the Nuer and Dinka communities of the region.²

No single set of sources was comprehensive, but combined they offered opportunities for 'triangulation' that produced considerable results. The documentary records frequently corroborated the oral testimony and helped to fix dates and chronology. There was general consistency between the testimony I recorded and testimony gathered by earlier administrators (e.g., Coriat 1923/1993; Stevenson-Hamilton 1920; Wyld 1931/1995). What was perhaps more surprising was that the testimony of the different communities that had often been in conflict with each other in the past was in substantial agreement over the essential historical facts. The Nuer readily stated that they occupy land that once belonged to the Dinka, whose place names they retained. They were even in agreement when relating such contentious issues as past battles (Johnson 1995). The content of these different sources enabled me to reconstruct a reasonably detailed picture of the

¹ The Sudan Intelligence Reports (and their earlier incarnation, the Intelligence Reports, Egypt) are a major source of primary materials on aspects of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of Sudan (see Johnson 2004).

² A full list of recorded interviews is given in Johnson 1994: 365-70.

environmental history of the region and relations between border peoples that challenged the anthropological stereotype of peoples locked together in permanent structural opposition (Johnson 1982, 1989, 1992, 1994).

Reconstructing a generally agreed upon version of the past was to prove more difficult when these same methods of historical research were later applied to the issue of Abyei. Whereas the written and oral sources for the Nuer-Dinka boundary provided both corroboration and consistency in testimony, both were much more difficult to achieve for Abyei.

The Abyei Boundaries Commission

The Abyei Protocol of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement was intended to resolve one of the outstanding issues that remained unimplemented from the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement. The protocol identified the Abyei Area as the territory of the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms transferred from Bahr el-Ghazal Province to Kordofan Province in 1905, and charged a boundaries commission to be formed after the signing of the CPA to define and demarcate that area.

This is not the place to rehearse the arguments put forward by the main parties in the dispute, or the arguments over the interpretation of the mandate of the Abyei Boundaries Commission (ABC), except so far as these arguments affected the efforts at historical reconstruction.³ The commission was composed of three delegations: the government, the SPLM, and the international experts. The government and SPLM delegations confined themselves to presenting arguments for their case, but neither side presented documentary evidence in support of their arguments. Rather they presented position papers and Power Point demonstrations that referred to extracts from documents, but never full documents. Both delegations agreed to leave the final interpretation of evidence to the international experts, who were required to consult documentary evidence where it could be found and take testimony in the field from representatives of the Ngok Dinka, Missiriyya, and neighbouring communities presented by the two sides. The experts conducted their search for documents in the National

³ For a summary of these arguments, see Johnson 2008.

Records Office, Khartoum University Library, the Sudan Archive of the University of Durham (SAD), and the map collection of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, independently of the presentations of the two sides, and consulted a far greater range of records than had been selected for presentation by the two delegations.⁴

The main difficulty confronting the experts was that, unlike my experience among the Nuer and Dinka of Jonglei, the parties to the dispute disagreed on all parts of the border. The SPLM and the representatives of the Ngok Dinka presented a consistent claim to a boundary to the north of the Ragaba ez-Zarga/Ngol, while the government delegation claimed that the northern border lay along the Bahr el-Arab, south of Abyei town itself, and the Missiriyya claimed all of the Abyei area as far south as the border with Warrap state. The effect of this was to undermine Missiriyya claims, while getting no additional support from Missiriyya testimony.

The first test was to see if oral testimony gathered could be corroborated by contemporary written records. The main problem here was the lack of reliable, detailed, contemporary geographical reporting.

Unlike the Bahr el-Jebel region, the pre-twentieth century exploration literature for the whole of the Bahr el-Arab and much of southern Kordofan is sparse. Two early visitors to the sultanate of Darfur, Browne (1806) and El-Tounsy (1845), recorded itineraries and second-hand accounts of the lands south of the sultanate that gave some hints as to the distribution of the inhabitants of that region, but nothing definite nor first-hand. The geographical surveys of the Egyptian government stopped short of southern Kordofan and had nothing to say on the issue (e.g., Colston 1878). The first British administrators to enter the area after the fall of the Mahdist state were tantalisingly vague in their geographical knowledge, and it became clear that for the period under investigation, administrative visitors often did not know where they were and were also uncertain about the location of the main waterways (Gleichen 1899; Mahon 1902, 1903; Boulnois 1904; Bayldon 1905; Wilkinson 1905). One problem was that administrators were looking for a river called 'Bahr el-Arab', a name the English traveller Browne had heard in Darfur, but local inhabitants called the

⁴ Documentary evidence and oral testimony are presented in Johnson et al. 2005.

river in question by different names: Kiir (Dinka), Jurf (Baggara), and even Bahr el-Jange (the river of the Dinka).

In so far as the early twentieth-century documents corroborated any of the oral testimony, they gave some support to Ngok Dinka claims about their relative position at the beginning of the century, and their relative wealth vis-à-vis the Missiriyya, but gave no support to Missiriyya claims that the Ngok Dinka had been destitute refugees whom the Missiriyya had allowed to settle on their land.

The second test was to see if there was any consistency between the testimony gathered in 2005 and testimony gathered by earlier researchers. Very little had been published on the history of the area, the main sources being Henderson (1939), Cunnison (1954, 1966) and Deng (1986, 1995). In this we were fortunate to be able to consult many of Henderson's own field notes (Henderson 1935a-d) which had been ignored by the government delegation (along with many other documents) in their trawl through the Durham archives.

In so far as the Missiriyya claimed that they had been in possession of territory both north and south of the Bahr el-Arab prior to 1905 and that the Ngok Dinka had first come to them seeking refuge, this was refuted by all the sources cited above. Henderson gave an account of the Dinka occupying a stretch of the Bahr el-Arab in the eighteenth century prior to the arrival of the Ḥumr Missiriyya, and even assisting them in their occupation of the territory farther north. Cunnison recorded that as recently as the early 1950s, some Missiriyya referred to the Bahr el-Arab as the Bahr ed-Deynka (1954: 50). In fact, the first recording of a Missiriyya claim to any part of the Ngok Dinka territory was in 1966, when it was rejected out of hand at an all-Sudanese tribunal (Saeed 1982: 163-164, 235, 420-423; Deng 1995: 296).

The Ngok Dinka testimony, on the other hand, was broadly consistent with what was published earlier by Henderson (1939) and Deng (1986), though more detailed as to places used for permanent settlements, cultivation, and seasonal grazing of cattle.

In the end, the use of historical methodology to reconstruct the territory occupied and used by the Ngok Dinka a hundred years previously turned out to be academic in the most dismissive sense. The government, though it had pledged itself to accept the decision of the international experts as final and binding, repudiated their own pledge and refused to accept the report. Arguments dragged on

throughout the six-year interim period of the CPA, culminating in a ruling in The Hague that confirmed most of the experts' findings. Demarcation on the ground was prevented by Sudanese army units while the government managed to reopen negotiations over the rest of the Abyei Protocol with the US and African Union mediators, preventing the promised Abyei referendum from taking place as scheduled. Finally, claiming provocation, Khartoum occupied Abyei militarily and dismissed the legal administration, in moves that presaged subsequent military action in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

This does not bode well for attempts to settle historical land claims elsewhere in Sudan or South Sudan. Even before, the southern referendum land claims within South Sudan were pitting communities against each other (Schomerus and Allen 2010). The application of recognised historical tests and historical methodology alone will not settle such disputes where the political will is lacking.

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Identifying South Sudanese: Registration for the January 2011 Referendum and Defining a New Nationality

Nicki Kindersley¹

The South Sudan referendum on secession on 9 January 2011 was a huge exercise in voter registration. With around half a million people across eastern and northern Africa, Europe, North America and Australia signing up to vote, the registration process demanded – for the first time – a practical, working definition of who is ‘South Sudanese’.

There had never been a specific or legal definition of being southern Sudanese, and the idea of legal and documentary South Sudanese nationality had been relatively irrelevant. Perhaps ironically, for a country that has experienced decades of violent conflicts partly over national identification, it is widely accepted that everyone is Sudanese (de Waal 2009). The referendum registration process was the first time this southern identification had to be turned into a functioning and apparently apolitical nationality: to identify and document the legitimate electorate required the practical creation of a fundamental international and personal boundary.

The struggle over the supposedly apolitical and precise definition and how it was applied in practice was particularly sensitive and meticulous within the small European southern Sudanese population that came to register in London. This chapter examines the processes and priorities of the registration organisers and ‘identifiers’ in the London registration centre in determining national belonging. The registration process was broadly inclusive in the close-knit European and particularly British Sudanese communities; among the 653 people

¹ Research was conducted during master’s studies, supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK. Interviews were conducted in London in December 2010 and January to March 2011; further interviews were conducted in July 2011 in Juba and Uganda. All the informants’ details have been anonymised. I am very grateful to Justin Willis, Zoe Cormack and Cherry Leonardi for comments on this chapter.

who registered to vote in London – the majority of whom were from the UK – only three cases were disputed.

This chapter argues that the cognitive production of an electorate involved the negotiation of terms and of what, from a range of legalistic, ethnic, social and historical options, constitutes proof of South Sudanese national identity. The Southern Sudanese Referendum Commission (SSRC) in the UK followed the somewhat flexible rules and definitions of the Referendum Act. Other criteria, however, namely southern ideas of social belonging and blood ties, were prioritised by the referendum staff and participants in this first attempt at fixing reference points for South Sudanese nationality.

This process was, therefore, a first go at confirming the values and priorities of the institution of South Sudanese nationality. This chapter draws on wider research on the cognitive processes of negotiating ethnic, indigenous and national markers of belonging (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004). In practice, these processes involve both pragmatism and absolutism: claims to nationality were rhetorically absolute, but practically negotiable. The registration of the South Sudanese electorate also emphasised the negotiation of what counts as proof of belonging – and the prioritisation of blood over paperwork. This was the first popular confirmation of South Sudanese nationality's essentialist and patriarchal markers and values, despite the realities of the pragmatic registration process.

Being Southern Sudanese: Becoming 'Legal'

Being South Sudanese had not been a nationality with fixed parameters or much practical or rhetorical application, even if identifying as 'southern' has been a powerful political statement throughout the twentieth- and into the twenty-first century. Being southern has been a claim to being part of a synthesis of (often indefinite and conflicting) racialised and autochthonous understandings of a broader regional community, but not necessarily of a specific citizenship or single, united aspirant nation. Being southern has also been a political claim, a marker of a political standpoint fuelled by racial and local belonging and common historical suffering.

The markers of 'southern-ness' have been primarily established in relation to northern Sudan. The difference between south and north

has been a key idea in Sudanese discourse politically, socially and even academically, thanks in part to the language divide, with northern Sudan predominantly speaking Arabic, and southern Sudan speaking a range of local languages. This apparent difference has been marketed as fundamental and implicit by a broad range of national and international politicians, academics and commentators, all emphasising the struggle for a communal national identity in the Sudan. Asserting yourself as southern Sudanese ties you to historical concepts of Sudanese difference, such as the colonial 'Southern Policy' assertion since the 1920s of economic, social and personal difference and practical separation from the mostly Muslim, Arabic-speaking north. Monolithic national 'Arab-ness' and more pluralist ideas have been reduced to binaries of north-south, Muslim-Christian and Arab-African. If anything, a national difference between the new state of South Sudan and Sudan is already explicit and was particularly noticeable in rhetoric around the referendum and independence. The difference between the two nationalities is apparently fundamental, and the parameters of each nationality are accordingly fixed and immutable.

To many, southerners are everything northerners are not. But definition by antithesis has made South Sudanese nationality a political stance, without an independent definition. Being southern Sudanese does not neatly equate to an ethnic or territorial identity, with most communities spanning borders, and with political allies drawn from outside the three provinces of Equatoria, Lakes and Bahr-el-Ghazal. In practice, however, this has hardly mattered. Southerners have been defined (and define themselves) by emphasising their exclusion, their absolute opposite of the apparently homogeneous Muslim Arab north. The parameters of 'southern-ness' had been implied by many northern and southern politicians – mostly along broadly ethnic, racial, historical and philosophical lines – but never converted into a dispassionate, explicit and generic definition, because there was no practical need for it. Being 'southern' was far more useful as a rallying cry. Speaking as southern Sudanese had always been a rhetorical tool, working as a subjective political identity that allies its members to a particular side in the Sudanese debate.

As such, discussion of individuals as legally South Sudanese was a new development. Generally, questions of citizenship have focused on

southerners resident in the north and cross-border migrants such as the Misseriyya, rather than the specific definition of who is a southerner. There had never been a working national definition of who is South Sudanese, and how this national identity can be claimed and proven.

Laws and proposals about South Sudanese nationality have been more political statements than clear texts. Sudanese law is based on a mix of generally quite old and politically inconsistent documents that has created general unpredictability and 'seems to leave great room for discretionary decisions' (Fournier 2008: 3; *cf.* Doebbler 1999). Most writers agree that actually 'establishing Sudan's legal framework is a challenge' (Fournier 2008: 4). Nationality law and constitutions were particularly vague until recent decades. Before 1948, a Sudanese person was anyone who was under Sudanese jurisdiction (Abdulbari 2011: 161). Most nationality laws since then have defined Sudanese nationality broadly in terms of patrilineal descent within the borders. If they do engage with a more specific definition, these laws and constitutions generally debate two basic questions: whether ethnicity should or should not find its way into the basic demands of territorial origin and descent, and whether descent is patrilineal.

These laws overlapped, creating rival definitions. For example, the interim southern constitution of 2005 contradicted the nationally-drafted Nationality Act 2005 and also undermined the Referendum Act 2009 by adding a patrilineality clause. Drawn up by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the 2003 New Sudan laws – published but never formally implemented – extended this ethno-political, patrilineal identity by including an ethnic, 'indigenous' definition of citizenship.² The evolution of nationality laws and constitutions towards more ethnic definitions of belonging reflected the 'racio-cultural' political rhetoric of southern Sudan since the 1950s (Deng 1973). As Abdulbari (2011: 160) argues, these laws were as much a part of the political argument as they were practical legal documents.

² The various laws and constitutions of Sudan and Southern Sudan are available online through RefWorld (<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld>) and the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/nations/sudan.php>); the 2003 SPLM laws are published at Gurtong.net (<http://www.gurtong.net/Governance/ConstitutionLaws/LawsofSouthSudan/tabid/342/Default.aspx>, accessed 29 August 2014).

Voter registration for the referendum on secession was the first time there was a need for a solid definition of who counted as South Sudanese. Without a clear pre-existing legal framework – let alone a generally accepted, dispassionate understanding of ‘southern-ness’ –, the need for a practical and non-negotiable definition of southern nationality was a real issue in the run-up to the referendum. The practical implications of trying to engineer a realistic and functional national definition of who is ‘South Sudanese’ had never been dealt with.

This huge issue, sensitive and difficult both emotionally and politically, was hardly discussed by the general population or political elite. Instead, controversies in the run-up to the referendum focused more on accusations of rigging and political influence on both sides, with Khartoum accusing the Juba government of putting widespread pressure on its population to vote for secession, and with accusations from southern politicians and student activists, particularly in Uganda, that the northern government was paying Ugandans to register as South Sudanese and then not vote, undermining the fifty percent turnout requirement, and that the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the organisation chosen to organise the referendum, were being politically influenced by Khartoum.³

In drafting the rules and guidelines for the referendum, the Referendum Commission had relatively little with which to work. As Ali Verjee (2010) pointed out in his pre-referendum report, the constitutions and the Referendum Act abdicated responsibility, probably sensibly, for actually defining which ‘indigenous communities’ and ‘ethnic communities’ are ‘settled’ in South Sudan. The Commission was under pressure to stay in line with the Referendum Act, particularly on gender equality issues by the myriad UN and NGO agencies in Juba, but also to reflect the wider understandings of southern identification as variously ethnic, autochthonous and politically ‘loyal’. The Commission

³ Interview with student activist in Uganda, 19 July 2011. See also “‘Do Not Register’ Message South Sudanese Diaspora”, by Larco Lomoyat. *Gurtong.net*, 13 November 2010. <http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/4352/Do-Not-Register-Message-to-South-Sudanese-Diaspora.aspx>; ‘Canada Votes: IOM Faces a Skeptical Southern Sudanese Community in Calgary’, by Mading Ngor. *New Sudan Vision*, 8 November 2010. http://www.newsudanvision.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2252:canada-votes-iom-faces-a-skeptical-southern-sudanese-community-in-calgary&catid=2:diaspora&Itemid=8, both accessed 29 August 2014.

also faced practical problems of documentation. No paperwork declared a person specifically 'South Sudanese', the vast majority of people had no birth certificates or proofs of permanent residence of their ancestors in the south, and many southerners of voting age had been born outside Sudan or in Khartoum. Much of the paperwork requested by the Referendum Commission said only 'Sudan' as place of origin. This is problematic even in the diaspora and refugee communities abroad, where identity documents are the norm. Although paperwork is seen as the hallmark of a definite identity, particularly in western countries, the paperwork available to define South Sudanese nationality was not necessarily powerful or reliable enough as proof.

As such, the referendum rules that emerged from this unhelpful legal background and intense political pressure were relatively complicated, involving three clauses and generally demanding substantial evidence. A voter could be:

- 'Voter who belongs to one of the indigenous ethnic communities residing in the Southern Sudan on or before 1 January 1956.' This voter could vote anywhere in the world.'
- 'Voter who traces his/her ancestry to one of the indigenous ethnic communities in Southern Sudan, but has not permanently resided in the South (without interruption) before or since January 1956.' This voter could only vote in the South, 'where he/she can be identified'.
- 'Voter who does not belong to one of the indigenous ethnic communities in the Southern Sudan, but he/she or his/her parents or grand-parents are permanently residing in the South (without interruption) since 1st January 1956.' This voter could only vote in the South, 'where he/she can be identified'.⁴

These clauses were still somewhat ambiguous, implying that permanent residents of South Sudan could vote anywhere in the world, but anyone who had emigrated, or who was not from an 'indigenous ethnic community' – a debatable idea in itself – had to vote in South Sudan. For the hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese living and working around the world, returning to southern Sudan to register and then vote over December 2010 and January 2011 was not

⁴ Southern Sudan Referendum Commission UK. 2010. 'Out of Country Registration and Voting.' 24 October, Poster.

possible. The Referendum Commission organised a system of international registration, with support from the IOM, in 37 voting centres around the world.⁵ Documentary proof of origin and ancestry was less a concern for the diaspora community living in Europe, North America and Australia, where there is broad understanding of the importance of identity documents and broader literacy, however, there were real worries over the identification of people as truly ‘indigenous’ southerners.

To attempt to pre-empt problems with identification, the Referendum Commission appointed people as ‘identifiers’ in each voting centre. The identifiers outside of Sudan were defined as ‘leaders from within the diaspora community who, after being confirmed by the SSRC, can assist the Chairperson of the Referendum Centre to verify the identity of the person without documents, thus allowing him or her to be registered’ (SSRC 2010a). The idea was that the identifiers be present in case a person had no documents. If definite documentary evidence of identity was produced, then a voter would not need to be checked further. The assumption was that there were enough fixed parameters of nationality that would stand up to practical tests.

In practice, however, these legal definitions and paper proofs were negotiable. Documentation was only one aspect of registering as a voter, if it was used at all. The identifiers took a far more central and interventionist role than the SSRC’s plans had implied. Proving to the identifiers your membership in the southern ‘community’ and your blood ties to South Sudan was in practice more important than the – often disputable – documentation. This is not to say that the identifiers introduced their own definition of who was South Sudanese, but they did depend on knowing the person, or knowing about their family, ethnicity, and their connections in the community. National identification through paperwork was often impossible and frequently irrelevant to the social and familial markers which were prioritised as proof of nationality. Powers of categorisation were devolved from legal terms and paper proofs to the community-picked identifiers.

⁵ See international voting centres on <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article37537>, accessed 10 June 2014.

Registration for the Referendum in London: Negotiating Inclusion

London's registration centre illustrates this negotiation between records and relatives. The Commission, and its legal definitions and guidelines, supposedly defined the values and necessities for South Sudanese citizenship. The everyday processes of identification in the London centre, however, show the prioritisation of moral and social citizenship by both staff and applicants. This section details the London processes – including the three disputed cases – and argues that a mix of autochthonous, political, social and racial markers were used to 'produce' necessary proofs of nationality. This was not a state or commission exercise; the process hung on social and cognitive organisation of national identification through discussion.

In London, five people worked as 'identifiers', all residents in the UK, and 653 people registered: out of these, there were several disputes over identity, two of which went to an appeals panel. Only one person was formally rejected, although the rejection was later withdrawn. Because of the small number of persons registering in London, it is likely that the workload of the five identifiers was less than elsewhere and that their role was greater, as they were a visible presence in the centre and could spend time on 'suspicious' cases. It was generally acknowledged that, between the five identifiers, they already knew most of the people who came to register, or at least knew of them and their children. However, even if the identifiers had heard of the applicant or knew members of their family, they still investigated their backgrounds. Throughout the process, the idea of familial and community belonging, of knowing each other, dominated discussions of registration and were prioritised – and, in one case, overruled documentary evidence.

It was generally acknowledged by the London identifiers and officials that the identifying process was improvised to a large extent. This is not to say that the identifiers and referendum officials acted in any way outside of the rules, but that the legal situation and the referendum guidelines were complicated and sometimes contradictory, and there was not a detailed procedure for identifying people whose documentation or family background was unclear. The referendum officials in London adopted a broad and inclusive approach, even in cases where the applicant had a less than

straightforward social and ethnic background. In some cases, despite days of debate among the identifiers, the Act's residency clause prevailed. For example, one applicant's mother was Zande and her father Arab, however, as the identifier explained to me, regardless of ethnicity, the father was resident in South Sudan since 1956 and therefore his daughter was southern.

Initial identification of 'southern-ness' often occurred on the basis of supposedly 'southern' characteristics. Racial appearance – and its implied indigeneity, or at least belonging to an indigenous community – was important, if not central, to the registration process. Most London officials acknowledged that first impressions were important in registering a person; if someone looked southern Sudanese, from their skin colour and physical features, they would be asked fewer questions.⁶ One identifier said everyone in the centre went very quiet when someone who did not 'look' southern Sudanese came in. Although no one was rejected in London because of 'Arab ethnicity', or dismissed on the basis of their skin colour, there was an emphasis on being clearly black and clearly southern. This was not always about being racially 'national', but also politically nationalist. One young man was able to register on the basis of his British passport because his name was Anyanya.⁷

This kind of social indigeneity was very necessary; the legal clause specifying a person's Southern origin through familial ties was a key marker of nationality in voter registration. The importance of belonging to the South Sudanese community and proving your family links in the country was repeatedly demonstrated in what an identifier termed the 'borderline' cases. One man, born to an Ethiopian mother and southern Sudanese father, and having never resided in southern Sudan, and having only met his father in southern Sudan recently, had little documentary evidence of his southern identity or his family's residence there. However, regardless of his origin and Ethiopian name, he was considered to be Anuak from southern Sudan once his Sudanese half-brother – who worked in the Government of South Sudan – confirmed their relationship over the phone. Although he would have fulfilled the 'ethnic' criteria of the Act, the identifier in the

⁶ Interviews with SSRC officials, London, 5-6 February 2011.

⁷ The Anyanya were the southern Sudanese guerrilla movement active from the mid-1960s to 1972.

case said he was registered because he had been accepted as a member of a southern Sudanese family by his father.⁸ This process was not demanding just 'state autochthony' (Zenker 2011: 76) but was concerned with 'village' and family autochthony.

Those who were known – or could be identified – as accepted members of the community in southern Sudan faced far less difficulty registering. One such applicant was actively supported by the identifiers and the appeal committee in the face of an external challenge and a serious lack of hard evidence of his identity. This person had lost several appeals for asylum in the UK as he was suspected of being Nigerian, but he was accepted by the identifiers despite a lack of documentation and an appeal against his registration by the Government of South Sudan's representatives in London. In defence of the decision, an identifier explained how he knew the man was Kakwa; he looked southern Sudanese, spoke some Kakwa, and could identify his great-grandfather and the local chief. His name could potentially be Kakwa, and he could provide a Ugandan Kakwa friend who said he had known him in a refugee camp in Uganda. The London representatives of the Government of South Sudan attempted to challenge this, on the basis that this was fabrication to shore up his asylum claim, but regardless of the lack of documentation to support his claim, the referendum staff upheld his registration, and he voted as South Sudanese. Government paperwork – in this case, from the governments of both the UK and Southern Sudan – was not powerful enough to overcome social identification. The applicant was an ethnic and political nationalist, with aspirations to indigeneity. Even in London, the 'inscrutable political priorities of distant government officials' had less 'real' power as proof than community support (Hutchinson 1996: 277).

The one application for registration that was initially rejected in London was hotly disputed for weeks. The young woman applicant had a Congolese father, a very light skin tone, an Islamic name and although born in the south had lived as a child in Khartoum; despite having no northern Sudanese ethnic background, these were interpreted as racial markers of 'Arab-ness'. Her mother, however, was allowed to register, despite being the daughter of a Greek man and a

⁸ Interview with SSRC UK identifier, London, 6 February 2011.

South Sudanese woman. The young woman had also not been back to southern Sudan to meet her uncle's family and so was not locally accepted as southern Sudanese in the south, as was the young man from Ethiopia. Potentially most importantly, she was not 'known' in the southern community in London, or by the identifiers. The identifier who refused her said there was therefore a problem with her heredity.⁹

The woman made three attempts to register to vote. The first time, she was refused outright on the basis of the identifier's lack of knowledge of her family and place of origin, and she also felt that her physical appearance and colour was taken into account. Officially, the woman was refused registration by the identifier specifically on the basis of her paternity: as her father was Congolese, the identifier applied the South Sudan Interim Constitution's patrilineality definition. She was then invited back to register by a senior official. At her second attempt to register, however, she was told that 'because [her] father is not southern Sudanese [she had] to go to SS to register'.

Although paternal nationality was given as the primary reason in these decisions, what was as much at stake was social acceptance and community membership. The issue of 'patrilineality', which attracts a lot of attention and frustration, while important is only one aspect of this wider prioritisation of social acceptance. Although the woman could trace her parentage to a family resident in the south in 1956, it was decided she had to be registered in the south, under the SSRC rule for persons that have 'lost touch' with their community of origin 'and can neither identify or be recognised as member of this community in other locations' (SSRC 2010b). These persons can only register in the south in the place where they trace their community of origin (SSRC 2010a). As the woman herself said, 'It's all about who you know.' She blames herself a little for her problems of registering, because she 'didn't get involved with the community enough'.¹⁰ The identifier that initially rejected the woman said that if her mother's chiefs in South Sudan had 'accepted' her, she 'could be South Sudanese' on paper.¹¹ Everyone involved in the case, including the woman herself, said her difficulties in registering were because she was not 'known' enough.

⁹ Interview with SSRC UK identifier, London, 6 February 2011.

¹⁰ Interview, London, 6 March 2011.

¹¹ Interview with SSRC UK identifier, London, 6 February 2011.

Eventually, the woman appealed the second decision – that she had to register in southern Sudan –, and the appeals committee decided she could register and vote in London. This did not constitute breaking laws, as they contradicted each other and depended largely on interpretation.

Each of these cases is a negotiation of what makes up nationality. Local social acceptance – a form of social autochthony, where an applicant was proven to come from a local community, not just the soil of southern Sudan – was more important than recognised legal routes to nationality. A lack of these social and political markers of belonging implied political and national disloyalty; the identifiers concerned themselves with choosing ‘good’ citizens. Much as Brubaker (2004) has argued, the London process did not draw a stark divide between ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ forms of identification, but prioritised proof of being ‘local’.

Paperwork and Blood

In the identification process for voter registration for the Southern Sudan referendum, ‘social confirmation’ and blood belonging were more valuable than paperwork. This is contrary to the focus of most of refugee studies on identification in migrant communities, which tend towards a fetishising of documentation. It is frequently argued that documents control migrant lives, that the passport holds ‘existential importance’ in providing both practical and psychological security in migration (Yaron 2009: 7). Such papers document monothetic social classifications and are state markers of individuals. They reflect only one part of a wider debate over national identification. Documents are used selectively and occasionally in migrant lives that focus more on community and familial support and practical social identification.

In voter registration, then, assertion of blood ties and the negotiation of local community membership won out over documents. ‘Difficult cases’ were resolved by confirming with family members in southern Sudan that applicants had been accepted as relations. The asylum seeker, despite documents – and the Government of South Sudan – claiming he was Nigerian, was socially confirmed as South Sudanese. This was not a solely autochthonous, land-based definition of nationality. Being from a local community that would vouch for you,

and asserting a specific historical and political membership were key parts of the registration centre's understanding of proving citizenship. The registration debates echo a long-running distinction in southern Sudanese communities between 'paper' and 'blood' (Hutchinson 1996: 287); despite increasing attempts to document South Sudanese identification, blood is still more important than paper.

The categories and markers used by people in their personal lives to determine southern-ness translated into official state markers – voting slips – through the process of 'identification' at the London centre. This largely social negotiation organised the production of paper proofs of national identity; people were made legitimate citizens through the production of paper. The referendum registration papers are one of the first proofs of South Sudanese national identity, with a powerful cachet – more powerful often than the paperwork the new Government of South Sudan has produced in its huge efforts to create national symbols and documentary proof of legitimacy and power.

The referendum, and its associated 'national' paperwork, did not attenuate the deeply politicised nature of being 'South Sudanese'. Registration cards are prized possessions, but rather than just being proof of voting, they are implied evidence of voting for secession. There is a powerful political and popular tenet in the south that 'everyone voted for secession'. This was reflected during the vote by widely documented social pressure on voters and competition between regions for the highest turnout and the highest percentage of 'yes' votes.¹²

A concern stemming from the identification process and the registration cards issued is that those who could not vote or were seen as 'disputed' – as not clearly 'indigenous' or 'accepted' and 'belonging'

¹² For competition over turnout and results, which will not be discussed here, see 'Over 90% of Voters Have Cast their Vote in Eastern Equatoria State,' by Ijoo Bosco, *Sudan Tribune*, 14 January 2011, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article37623>; 'Southern Sudan's Capital Juba Voted 97.5% for Independence, 1.6% for Unity,' by Matt Richmond and Maram Mazen, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 19 January 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-01-19/southern-sudan-s-capital-voted-97-5-for-independence-1-6-for-unity.html>; and 'Ezo County Votes 100% Separation from Sudan,' by Clement Gbatanawo, *Oye Times*, 24 January 2011, <http://www.oyetimes.com/news/africa/9000-ezo-county-votes-100-separation>. For concern over voting pressure and rigging, see 'Jonglei State Referendum Body Dismiss Over-voting Reports,' *Sudan Tribune*, 25 January 2011, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article37756>, all accessed 29 August 2014.

to the community – are outsiders, pro-unity and therefore potentially opponents of the new, independent South. Registration cards are signs of national loyalty, because in the popular political rhetoric of South Sudan, if you voted, you voted for secession. The cards are proof of citizenship, but also of a political dividing line (Abowitz and Harnish 2006: 659).

South Sudanese citizenship is still intensely politically defined; loyalty constitutes a primary element of citizenship. Southerners returning to the south report being called *jallāba* and having their loyalty and commitment to the new state – and how they voted in the referendum – questioned by locals.¹³ Communities in the southern provinces of northern Sudan that are seen as pro-SPLM-North by the Khartoum government have been told to move across the national boundary to the South; apparently nationality is still defined by political affiliation. This is an example of conservative citizenship, requiring not just a common set of values but extreme patriotism.

In the Southern Sudan referendum, voters had to prove they were both genealogically and politically southern. The arguments over ‘borderline cases’ provide insight into the negotiation of boundaries and markers of southern citizenship. Despite recent attempts at legal clarification, debates continue over who is southern, and therefore what southern nationality is. The heavy reliance on social confirmation of national identity in the only nationwide legal test so far is likely to continue to inform and complicate negotiation of on what constitutes sufficient ‘belonging’ to be South Sudanese. The referendum registration was in many ways the start of a struggle to define citizenship in South Sudan.

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The Order of Iconicity and the Mutability of 'the Moro Language'

Siri Lamoureaux

In Sudan, where the state promotes and enforces Arabic monolingualism, alternative forms of language and literacy are evidence of the problems with this policy. In this context a small piece of writing and how people engage with it tells us about how the national language policy is critiqued, but the order of iconicity is confirmed through the standardisation of 'the Moro language'. The text below is taken from a page in a young Moro woman's school notebook in Abulella village in the Nuba Mountains. The first line in her notebook is written in Moro script, the second in English.

Original text:

13/10/2008

al ganisa yiṭuniya yandu ṇen ṭa yabrniya ṇaka ḍmasiya eṇen iṇi ṇaibwa

in the nama of are Lod Jasas Gar eman day of the week to day is

25/12/2008

Translation into standardised English:

13/10/2008

The church in the world believes to save [illegible] of Messiah from this heat

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Amen day of the week today is

25/12/2008

Anyone competent in English will recognise problems in the second line of the original. The author employs nonstandard spelling, problematic word boundaries, inconsistent use of capitals, no punctua-

tion and other errors. A person literate in Moro will recognise similar problems in the Moro text. I examined the text with a Moro literacy teacher, considered by Moro to be an authority on the language. According to his evaluation, even though Moro is her mother tongue, 'she has a problem with spelling since she mixes g with k' and 'she doesn't know capitals'. He also noticed that her word order was not 'correct'. She exhibits partial literacy in both English and Moro. From the mention of Biblical figures and excerpts, we know that this learning has taken place in the context of Christian education and that the English language is used alongside Moro. That she correctly capitalises 'Lord Jesus Christ' suggests the frequency and importance of this training. That there is a 'right' or 'wrong' way to write this language means that this teacher is guided by a prescriptive attitude towards a language that has been written for a little more than half a century.

Language prescription concerns normative ideas or grammatical rules about how language should be used according to some predetermined and often arbitrary standard, e.g., in English it is considered bad form to put a preposition at the end of a sentence. 'Who did you talk to?' is considered 'bad English' while 'To whom did you talk?' is considered correct. This is different from linguistic competence which is composed of a largely unconscious set of rules such as the fact that English does not allow you to say 'chicken Fred bought'. Language description is a technique meant to capture implicit rules that speakers of a language know in order to communicate competently. Describing language means capturing the realities of spoken communication where 'Who did you talk to?', for example, is perfectly normal for almost any native speaker, and some forms, e.g., 'I didn't talk to nobody,' are acceptable for some dialects. Using these deviant forms does not mean being an incompetent speaker of English; it means not adhering to the prescriptive rules of English. People have been speaking (and writing) English for centuries, but English, as a codified, standardised system with prescriptive rules for grammar, spelling and punctuation has existed only for a couple centuries.

Language standardisation for Moro began in the early twentieth century alongside the British colonial attempt to provide education and Christian moral enlightenment to Nuba people. Literacy is the regime through which this process took shape; it was part of a larger

process of establishing a system for making functional citizens. The regime dictates how things are expressed; those that have literacy skills belong, and those that do not are excluded by national and even globalised norms of literacy. Literacy becomes an arena for the exercise of power and a monopoly over education, jobs, elections, the internet, the state, civic participation of certain groups over others, etc. Control over literacy (otherwise known as the legitimate language) is control over symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977: 646).

In Sudan today, only the Arabic language is recognised, and even enforced, which contributes to the loss of Sudan's linguistic diversity. The northern Sudanese state has been pursuing a policy of national unity through a monolingual Arabic policy since independence. Language is thought to be a powerful unifying force for forging national identity and constituting an Arab-centric 'reality'. This provokes a number of Nuba groups to seek the same status for their unwritten languages, in the interest of preserving and promoting their continued use as well as the symbolic meaning of having and using a writing system. Standardising 'the language' as 'reality' is equated with survival of the group.

As Angelo (head of Moro Literacy Committee) tells me, 'If we don't write our language down we will die.' He privileges the importance of writing language down, a practice grounded in the same ideology as that which makes Arabic the national language: literacy as a mark of civilisation, culture and history. This ideology draws on the semiotic model of iconicity (Gal and Irvine 2000: 37), that is, the simplified one-to-one connection between a group of people and the language they speak. The order of iconicity which dominates the institutionalised language policy in the Sudan makes an equation between speaking Arabic and being Arab and in the same way, Moro envisage being 'the Moro people' through the standardisation of 'the Moro language'. In spite of the diversity of linguistic practices, the order of iconicity continues to motivate the efforts and interests of actors to stabilise a certain reality. Common technologies of literacy and iconicity carry great weight in the western history of nation-identifying and nation-building. Anderson (1991), Boas (1911), Herder (2002), and Whorf (1956) among others, for example, have privileged the importance of iconicity, as do colonial governments, modern states and international agencies. One feature that makes the implementation of such a policy

of monolingualism is different from case to case is whether 'the language' is problematised or the people meant to speak it.

The Sudanese state's language policy is unreflexive. Rather than considering whether 'the Arabic language' is the appropriate common expression for the diverse Sudanese peoples, it is rather the people that are troubled for not being represented by 'the language', which remains fixed, immutable and impractical for many including native speakers of Sudanese Arabic.¹ In the case of the Moro Literacy Committee, the situation is the opposite, and possibly the reason for its ongoing importance among Moro people who nonetheless need Arabic to make a living. While the Committee gradually adopts the same order of iconicity – mirroring the Sudanese Government's policy – and is therefore subject to the same critiques, it nonetheless problematises 'the language' as the appropriate reference for 'the Moro people'. People differ as to how to define 'the language' and how to put it into writing. These discrepancies are significant, as they have consequences for the way people represent and define themselves as an ethnic unit. As understandings of 'the Moro people' change over time along with changing political agendas, so does 'the Moro language'. Thus, what is defended is not the grammatical system per se, as that is constantly negotiated, but rather the order of iconicity. The only serious threat to the Moro Language Programme is the actors who do not recognise the importance of iconicity, who may reject or ignore the enterprise altogether and prioritise Sudanese Arabic instead in order to make do.

In this contribution, I detail the various efforts to establish Moro language prescriptivism, to legitimise it and regulate it, and how this is contested and negotiated, which leads to new attempts at confirmation. Even though thousands of Moro know how to read and write 'the language', they nonetheless speak six or seven dialects. For Moro people today, it is still common to characterise differences in the dialects – to say that one dialect is 'heavy' and another 'light' and that one just sounds funny or sing-songy. People outside the literacy programme do not have consistent ideas about where their language comes from and will often claim their own dialect is the 'best'. Many have never thought about such issues. Dialect differences are audible

¹ See Spitulnik 1988 for a very different approach to a multilingual African population in Zambia.

and people are aware of them, that is, they mean something socially, but ideas of 'correct' or 'incorrect' seem to be reserved for those who have studied 'the language', those who have been involved in the regime of literacy.

In Khartoum, where the various dialects come into daily contact, everyday language practices show a lot of fluidity – a spontaneous approach to making the best of things. But 'the language' of literacy is an area of great debate, negotiation and multiple opinions. I will show the prescriptive bias of the various approaches and how such biases open avenues for critique. Various groups of actors are involved, including missionaries, literacy activists, religious leaders and ordinary people, each with their respective positions and committed engagement. One aspect of these negotiations concerns the relationships, expectations and ideologies between local language activists and the scientific team involved in a documentation project and/or missionary endeavour.

The Colonial Missionaries – Creating Order through Linguistic Regularity

In this section, I discuss how the concept of iconicity was introduced in the Nuba Mountains. Standardising African languages emerged among other European information-gathering projects at the end of the nineteenth century (Irvine 2008). It was undertaken by investigators with predominantly colonial missionary, but also scholarly and imperialist, interests – working alongside colonial administrators with military and economic interests (Irvine 2008) – and armed with European ideologies about how to identify and delimit, codify and teach language (see Gal and Irvine 2000; Blommaert 2005: 5 on 'the philological tradition'). They carried prejudices with them and the resulting linguistic descriptions reflected this, with reduced and simplified grammars without social referents, and vocabulary lists which did not represent the social reality of the people so much as categories appropriate to European life (Irvine 2008). The idea was to improve the language and preserve an authentic unadulterated version of it – to remove the influence of other languages: 'the connection of linguistic analysis with the establishment of standards, and with intellectual and moral improvement, was widespread, as was the

image of wild chaos that many scholars thought must necessarily characterise languages lacking an indigenous written literature' (Irvine 2001: 67). Language was meant to be a natural index of ethnic distinctiveness (Irvine 2008: 337). 'Languages' were identified based on colonial ideas about the political importance of that language and whether it was meant to represent a certain homogeneous ethno-linguistic unit. Linguistic differences were exaggerated.

In the Nuba Mountains, the story began during the colonial period with the isolationist policies of the British. In the 1920s they created an artificial division between the 'northern Arab' areas and the 'Black' southern pagan areas (Sanderson 1963: 237) of the Nuba Mountains. For the northern areas, *kalwāt* or 'Quranic schools' were allowed to remain, while in the southern part, Christian missions were installed. In the Moro area, the Sudan United Mission (SUM), an Anglican Christian group from Australia was brought in to train clerks, open schools, provide social services and conduct linguistic and ethnographic work. In 1937, the first SUM Mission was established at Abullella in the Moro area. The SUM missionaries began translating the New Testament into the Ləŋorəban dialect; it was published in 1965 and the revised edition in 1993. Local evangelists taught people to write in this Moro dialect using the Latin alphabet.

Moro people, until the first missionaries came, had no vocabulary to talk about literacy. Missionaries developed a writing system based on the phonetic alphabet – a notation system from the Roman alphabet – a form of which is now used as the international standard by linguists in the transcription of languages. They also developed the first vocabulary to talk about literacy in Moro. Currently it includes a set of verbs and nouns, most of which are borrowed from Arabic or are metaphorical extensions from other Moro words. For example, the words *gabəgəria*² 'read', *dəgəria* 'education, literacy', *lənɡələm* 'pen' and *almaḡarasa* 'school' come from Arabic words. The verb 'to write' is a metaphorical extension of the Moro verb *gawərđia* which is also used for burning designs in calabash, body painting, writings in amulets, carving, drawing and decorating. Similarly, *abərela* 'paper, letter' means other flat or dry brittle things, e.g., 'leaf, sorghum leaf, snake

² The transcription system used here is that used by the current Moro Literacy Committee – not the same as that used by the early missionaries, nor linguists.

skin, egg shell'. The words for 'teach, teacher' come from the Moro word *gabērəñēīdīa* 'teach, show, demonstrate', etc. The first texts, however, were accessible to only a select group of people trained in these vocabulary and literacy tools. The first primary school, established in 1947, encouraged the spread of literacy in English for a few pupils.

At this time a 'Nuba Renaissance' was envisioned by Angus Gillan, colonial Governor of South Kordofan (Willis 2003: 38). Gillan's policy was to counter the encroachment of Arabic by federating the various languages and isolated communities and merging them with Christian moral teaching. Identification of Nuba languages was linked with administrative control and with what was called 'pure' Christianity, linked closely with traditional life. Such an ethos of preservation and nostalgia became significant in Protestant missions in the 1920s, in their efforts to make Christianity 'truly indigenous in Africa' (Smith cited in Willis 2003: 36). 'The preservation – indeed, the revival – of Nuba culture would thus be identical with the establishment of effective colonial control through chiefs whose power "lies mainly in the rigorous observance of ancient traditions"' (Willis 2003: 38).

By essentialising the Nuba this way rather than recognising differences among them, educators had difficulty identifying commonly understood cultural practices on which to model their lessons. Gillan (1931, cited in Abdelhay 2010: 205) stated: 'How many reasonably well informed outsiders are there who realise that there is no "Nuba" tribe or race, but an as yet unknown number of entirely different stocks, of different cultures, religions and stages of civilisation, speaking perhaps as many as ten entirely different languages and some fifty dialects more or less mutually unintelligible?' As Abdelhay (2010: 205) points out, that the colonialists were enumerating ten languages and fifty dialects is already based in a certain understanding of how to define 'language' and 'dialect'. Splitting and lumping followed racial and linguistic premises, for example Gillan suggested uniting Tima with Katala (Katla) vis-à-vis their Missiriyya (Arab) neighbours (Abdelhay 2010: 206).

Indigeneity and authenticity were potent concepts in these groupings. The MacDiarmid missionaries produced 'a sketch map of Nuba language groups' which was used for this, the self-contained units yielding distinct territorial areas meant to represent one identity and

one standardised language to represent it in the form of a codified albeit dysfunctional literacy. Nadel's classic ethnography (1947) was a colonial product meant to classify the Nuba cultures and languages in order to put forward a policy. In the process of classifying, some groups are identified and others left unmentioned in a practice of erasure (Gal and Irvine 2000: 38). Nadel's ethnography, while not representative of the realities of the Nuba Mountains, has nonetheless shaped both local and academic perceptions of the region up to now, with political consequences.

The colonial period ultimately left a very confused legacy and artificial cultural divisions between peoples based on decontextualised policies.³ Some of the early missionaries were trying to apply a concept of common heritage and unity in a context of diversity and localism. Others were more sensitive to local differences. As one missionary in the Moro area explained to me, '[...] the first thing we needed to do in the new environment was to identify those things which belonged to our own culture and put them aside.' This ambivalent policy left a dysfunctional literacy – and at least early on, very few Christian converts. They also left the seeds of belief in self-contained racial and tribal units, the importance of a language to represent this unit, and language as an ethnic emblem, ideas which are later exaggerated and politicised in the forging of tribal distinctions.

As is well known in the literature (e.g., Ranger 1989), colonial and Christian interventions have had a real and lasting effect on people and how they perceive their ethnic and linguistic identity. As Willis (2003: 33) puts it, the missionaries 'came full of enthusiasm for the preservation of traditional life, and for the possibility of engaging with local spirituality, and producing a distinctive Christian synthesis: the famous package of Christianity, commerce and civilisation was to be unbundled here. Yet the populace of the mountains sought to further unbundle, and repackage, the offerings of the mission.' For Moro, this unbundling happened decades later, when, during the first Sudanese

³ For example, in the mission schools, vernacular languages were used in instruction as was English and later Arabic, but Arabic taught in the Latin alphabet; thus literacy became an ideological tool of the missionaries. The justification was that these Nuba needed to speak to their Arab neighbours, but by avoiding the Arabic script, they would not start to read Arabic literature and the Qur'an which would corrupt their tribal affiliations (Sanderson 1963; Abdelhay 2010).

civil war, most Moro became Christian, and the necessity of reading the Bible encouraged a massive increase in Moro literacy in the early 1980s. The 'language' depicted by the missionaries was only confirmed in the Moro community during this time.

Confirming 'the Language' through Religion: Emergence of a Prescriptive Bias

Here, I describe how religion is the major factor legitimising the first version of the written language. In the Moro region as in other Nuba rural places, there is no electricity, limited water supply, and generally no infrastructure except for a new cellular tower which services about one-third of the area.⁴ In stark contrast, a row of shiny new zinc-roofed churches have sprung up, all along the length of the plateau in between the mountain ranges, funded by a Samaritan's Purse project to build nondenominational churches in Africa. In part through the financial support to and training in education in the Mountains and in Khartoum, Christianity is a massive factor in the reshaping of Moro society. Discussing Moro language development without discussing the current role of the Church would be impossible.

The literacy movement that took root in the late 1970s and early 1980s challenges some of the assumptions established by the early missionaries for writing and developing their language. Missionaries started working on Moro in the 1930s; in the 1960-1970s, the first grammar, the New Testament and literacy books were published by Keith and Betty Black. The missionaries were then expelled from Sudan and educated Moro took over the activities of the language programme, opening language centres both in the mountains and in Khartoum. Emphasis at this time was on reading the Bible, and no teaching was put into being productive in the language – that is, writing it. In fact, it is questionable whether 'reading' is the correct term, because much of what was done was rote memorisation of the Bible. In the New Testament, there is no use of capitals and almost no punctuation of Moro, no indentations and no quotations. The early writing system did not present itself as a literacy system in the way European languages do.

⁴ As of 4 June 2011, war was being fought in this area. Churches and the cellular towers were destroyed by aerial bombs.

As more people were inducted into the literacy regime, problems arose. The New Testament is based on the Ləŋorəban dialect, because the missionaries were living and working among Ləŋorəban. Ləŋorəban dialect is sufficiently distinct from other dialects that it is not completely intelligible with them, while the other dialects are mutually intelligible among one another. This meant that the majority of Moro becoming literate could not easily access the Bible. For example the word *majen* means ‘now’ in Ləŋorəban, but ‘a long time ago’ in other dialects.⁵

Another aspect of this basic problem was that Ləŋorəban is a dialect spoken in the southern Moro area near a group of hills close to another group of hills where people known as Masakin live. The folk history goes that people from Masakin migrated north and mixed with some Moro and settled in Aŋorəban, which means ‘brothers’ in Moro, referencing their purported adoption as kin by the Moro people. Popular comments on the Aŋorəban people and their language include, e.g., ‘they are not the real Moro’ and ‘their language is heavy (Arabic: *ṭaqīl*), not light (Arabic: *kaṭīf*) like the language of Lebu and Abulella.’ Some groups (Latobrenda, Abulella, Aŋorəban) consistently refer to El Lebu as the ancestral tongue because that is where Moro are thought to have originated. According to a common language ideology, the ‘correct’ language is the ‘original’ language. That the first missionaries and linguists institutionalised the dialect from Aŋorəban contradicts the folk narrative according to which the roots of the Moro language come from El Lebu, not Aŋorəban.

In the 1990s debates ensued in the Church. Dialect differences were seen as antithetical to unity because the diversity of languages in the world is the result of man’s rebellion against God.⁶ Some proposed solutions included doing completely separate translations of the New Testament for each dialect, but this was rejected even by Ləŋorəban. In Khartoum, it is thought that the dialects are dying out because children start speaking a mixed dialect of Moro. This contrasts with the im-

⁵ A number of dialectal differences plagued the literacy and church texts including long and short vowels and consonants, lexical tone contrasts, stress, contrasts between labial consonants {f, b, v, w} and between dentals and alveolars {t and d, ɖ and ɽ}.

⁶ Keith Black clarified this to me: Genesis 11 relates the story of Babel and the confusion of languages. Acts 17:24-34 explains that only when Christ returns will there be unity among people.

portance of Ləŋorəban in church sermons, which importance is now generalised to other speech events. For example, in my discussions and interviews, I hear language students express ideas about the ‘correct’ language with reference to the written version or sometimes the ‘language of the Bible’. If I ask which version is considered the right one between two dialectical options, the written standard is chosen, even though this is often a word from the Ləŋorəban dialect. Memorised passages from the Bible are often referenced for citing ‘correct’ language. In searching for the verb ‘to be born’ one student hesitated but was then able to access that form through citation of the Biblical phrase, ‘Jesus galainiŋgu in Bethlehem.’ In speeches, pastors and language experts use code-switching between their own dialect and the written language, drawing frequently from Ləŋorəban. Because of thirty years of literacy taught through Bible education, this is the version with which most adult Christian Moro are familiar, and the one (it seems, at least currently) to be considered the correct version. Even though Moro know full well that Ləŋorəban is not the ‘original’ Moro, this written standard appears to be assuming the status of the ‘correct’ Moro for many.

Following is an excerpt from a speech given by Reverend Musa Algadi in which he discusses the plight of the Moro people through the story of the Jews in the Book of Nehemiah. In his speech, he draws from English, Arabic and the Ləŋorəban register which I call Biblical Moro while speaking from his own dialect Tobqrelda.

Even though the topic of this speech is the importance of cultural and linguistic purity with reference to the exile and return of the Jews, the reverend admits his language is ‘corrupted’ by Arabic: in line 7 the word *tasfia* is a Moro word borrowed from Arabic meaning ‘purification, sorting out’. The use of the form *ndmāle* ‘They do’ is significant. The reverend is using the Ləŋorəban language – that of the Bible – rather than his own pronunciation which would be *ldmele* ‘They do’, meaning he is applying the written Biblical standard in his oral speech.

Excerpt from speech by Rev. Musa Algadi

	Excerpt from speech	English translation
1	Aaaa, Nehemiah	Ahhh, Nehemiah
2	و عزرا	and Ezra
3	Leḍa ildi ləgəjan ildi liḍu ɲen gogəna kañ eleda ildi lədo	These two people they do great things among these people,
4	اليهود	the Jews
5	leḍa lobəḍaṭo eḍəɲəḍi ḍə nehmayah... ɲen ɲano Iglogo	People run in the hand of Nehemiah's concern like I said
6	هسع دا	Now...
7	Garəmwoto ɲen ɲogəna. Nenia leṭo ndmole ʔasfia	He had a big plan. When they came they did the sorting out
8	عشان	because
9	Alnwane liji lefo ledo ɲgwa, ɲi igadwata ḍəmwarəɲa ḍəmwaḍa ḍakəro. Jon paja nacəmar ḍəmwarəɲa gənənəɲu gento	they wanted to see the people – those who are leaders – like me I speak Moro with broken Arabic – leave Moro to Jon Paja, ⁷ only he can speak it
10	مش كدا	It goes like that
11	Jon paja gənəɲu gadwata ḍəmwarəɲa ḍəemwa ḍerəu na ʔia lḍaṭa lḍəfwaḍaṭe leḍa	John Paja himself speaks Moro from the root – that's why when they sorted out [the people] there were some children who

Source: Moro Language Workshop, September 2010; translation by author.

The use of Biblical Moro influences the speech-giving register, as does English which was the original vehicle for the teaching of Christianity in the Sudan for the Episcopal Church. Religious elites reinforce this through their speech and sermon-giving style. Moro pastors, priests and bishops and all those leading the various denominations in Sudan use this register. Religion becomes the main reason for this version of the language being taken up. According to one person, Ləɲorəban sounds like 'Old Moro' in the same way the

⁷ John Paja is a celebrated Moro singer, known for his creative prose and his unadulterated use of the Moro language.

Bible often sounds like Old English. Ləŋorəban was recorded by an earlier generation and by speakers of this dialect; it took on the status of the only legitimate language because it was and is perceived as the language of the word of God.⁸

Contesting ‘the Language’: Capitalisation and Punctuation

This section illustrates how concerns over ethnic representation and the increasing politicisation of identity direct the efforts of the literacy committee and how ‘the language’ is adapted to these circumstances. From 1993 to 1997, a new wave of activity encouraged an overhaul of the Moro ‘language’. The Isaac Kuku Academy for Moro language was established in Omdurman in Greater Khartoum with support from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).⁹ An ongoing concern was that the New Testament was in Ləŋorəban dialect. A massive revamping of the Bible and literacy materials was undertaken by the Moro Literacy Committee that ran the language centre. Interestingly, committee members did not seek to realign the written version of the language with their notion of the ‘original’ version – that of El Lebu.

The leaders of the Moro Literacy Committee chose another option. They decided to combine the seven dialects. Three men were brought as representatives from each of the six (now seven) clans and, through a democratic process of majority rule, they elected words and expressions that would represent the most common pronunciation. They also created discussions around how ‘authentic’ certain words were or how to indigenise borrowed concepts. It was important to give the most natural Moro expression to the foreign adopted tools of literacy. For example, the stories used in the literacy primers are based on creative brainstorming with Moro students. The invented language used to describe mathematical calculations is based on Moro expressions for counting.

⁸ Phrases in Biblical language are becoming widespread, such as *běrnia* *běrnia* ‘early morning’ whereas all dialects say in casual speech *uleldiṭano ram* ‘early morning’.

⁹ The American-based Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), perhaps the largest Protestant missionary society in the world (Hvalkof and Aaby 1981), describes unwritten languages and translates the Bible into them, in order to spread the word of God. Its evangelical strategy is through science, literacy and education.

At the same time, the literacy committee sought to further 'develop' and 'modernise' the language in their own words. Members revamped the writing standards by adopting the English rules for punctuation and capitalisation. It was important that the word for God, *Rəmwā*, in the Bible be capitalised, in order to distinguish it from lower-case *rəmwā* which means 'god, snake, rain'. The introduction of capital letters created a disjunction between the newer students and the older generation. People still refer to their training with respect to the 'small letters' and the 'big letters'.

Although SIL funding for this programme has ceased, literacy classes in the new literacy system are held in a number of locations both in Khartoum and, with SPLM/A support (prior to the war starting in June 2011), in the Nuba Mountains at the Moro primary schools and for adults in the evenings. The Old Testament is currently in the process of being translated by the Sudan Bible Society into this new Moro language. In addition the Sudan Bible Society has recently paid for the reprinting of 10,000 Moro Bibles; some 40,000 books on Moro culture and history have also been printed and distributed in the Nuba Mountains, Khartoum, Bahri, Cairo and as far as Australia through church and kinship networks. Close to fifty books on various topics including health, time, money, weather, folk stories as well as religious texts are published. The language centre in Khartoum also publishes an occasional newsletter, exchanges handwritten letters between language students in Khartoum and the Mountains and generally serves as the cultural centre for Moro in Khartoum. Other media include hymn books and cassettes, which can be purchased at most Moro church events.

This current literacy programme represents a new, more politicised Moro identity. While people are motivated by the desire to read the Bible, the literacy programme has taken a new direction. Students overcome the hurdle of capitalisation and enter a world of language endangerment, identity loss, war and tribalism. Being productive in Moro becomes important, rather than just accessing the Bible. Writing in addition to reading along is taught as a semiotic practice legitimising this new interest. The literacy programme includes exercises in letter and essay writing. In these exercises, students are corrected towards the new written language if they write in their own dialect. Moro students who read the newsletter are introduced to essays and

editorials about the loss of Moro culture, about urban social problems, alongside articles about how to be Christian in the midst of massive social change.

The occasional newsletter has English-style punctuation such as paragraphs and capitals. The two-column layout, fonts and headings imitate a newspaper format, all techniques of presenting the language as a modern, fully functional one, capable of keeping up with the needs of modernity. It hosts contributions from the community, students' and women's groups, small articles about traditional culture and advice on how to deal with common social issues. It also has a section for cross-word puzzles and other vocabulary games. Themes in the newspapers and literacy books include anything from health to marriage advice or 'How to be a good Moro wife,' and moreover, how the key to survival is a unified Moro tribe. A unified language is a unified Moro.

For the language activists, the new language is a means of organising the Moro clans into a larger and stronger entity. In the words of Moro Bishop Ismail Jibril in a recent Moro Language Development Workshop: 'Please, I ask a special request from you, forget about the clans and those small divisions and let us unite and write and improve our language'. Of interest to these activists are not the peculiarities of each dialect but rather how to create unity.

Sure, people speak other languages and don't write them, but then they don't realise that these are languages, they think of them as *rotana* "slang". When you write it down, it becomes a topic, something to think about and discuss, it makes them realise that this is a language, and so it won't die, because they won't forget it if it's a language.

– Rihal, Moro language student

In parallel with its status as a Biblical language, the written 'language' has in the last two decades taken on the important ideological role as a mark of status, civilisation and history, which role the colonialists envisioned but failed to realise.

'The Language' Today – an Ongoing Negotiation

I have presented the first missionaries' establishment of the Moro language, which was only later legitimised through conflict-related Christianisation and the beginnings of a political identity, and subsequently critiqued and reconfirmed with the changing Moro political agenda. Today, 'the language' is known by most adult Moro but still raises doubts across different sets of actors internally and externally. In this section, I survey the various kinds of critiques, which question the way 'the language' is written but nonetheless confirm the order of iconicity.

A first set of issues concerns dissent among the literacy activists. Not everyone believes that Moro language and literacy programmes need be under the umbrella of the Church. Informally, the programme is dominated by pastors, bishops and priests, but the majority of the work is done by a minority of 'language experts' who see this as a hindrance to the 'development' of the language. The head of the Moro Literacy Committee, recently presented a paper at a Nuba linguistics conference. A meeting of the Moro people was held to discuss his paper. One of the pastors during the meeting said, 'Your paper is good, but you should have put something in there thanking God for the Church bringing us into enlightenment.' The director disagrees: 'The Church did a lot to affect our culture. If there's something they don't understand, they call it Satan. They changed our names, John, Philip, turned us into *kawajāt* "Western people", Jews, and who are we? So from both sides, Arabs and Christians, and our culture is lost in the middle.'¹⁰ Another member observes that all the literacy meetings are structured like a church service, with intermittent prayers and hymns throughout. These leaders agree on this point – that the Church was the main destructor of their community, of their culture. 'There was no talk of children coming from "you don't know where", a boy has to stay in the cattle camps until the 6th stage before he can marry [...] the Church has cancelled these things.' In church, for example, young men and women can mingle and this is stated by many as a dangerous thing. The director's position is, in fact, an overcorrection from an earlier position when he was criticised for ignoring the Moro Muslims

¹⁰ Informal discussion, 30 August 2011.

altogether in the language programme. This critique came from one community in the northern Moro area of Ndərria where more Muslims live. On one occasion the Literacy Committee was blamed for publicly slighting them, and the whole group left the programme. While there have been discussions around the need to translate the Qur'ān, it is believed the Qur'ān cannot be translated into Moro by these Muslims. Both critiques concern the increasingly secular orientation of the literacy programme.

Another critique comes from the literate community in general and concerns the irregularity of 'the language'. Just following a celebration for the publication of the Book of Nehemiah in September 2012, one literacy teacher sat in the yard of the language centre, highlighting passages in the book and shaking his head. He was marking passages where the new pidginised language was inconsistent. The Bible Translation Committee prides itself on its democratic process, but in failing to maintain the use of certain forms over others it confuses the readership. For example, 'place' was spelled according to both Ləŋorəban and Latobərenda pronunciations on one page as *ano* and *alo* and the same problem held for the question word 'what', *ŋwande* in Latobərenda and *wēdegi* in Ləŋorəban. This inconsistency is strange for people. The Bible Committee is nowadays blamed for being dominated too much by Latobərenda, and the old debate about which dialect to write down has resumed. The Bible Committee, in turn, defends its use of these various forms as a gesture of inclusiveness.

There is a final set of players in this game, scientists in the US who have been analysing one of the Moro dialects from afar. Scientist linguists have their own techniques and practices for identifying what counts as language. Uniformity and the discovery of regularity are the techniques for classifying, controlling and organising people both in science and in politics (see Blommaert 2009 for a critique of this practice). On the other side of the world, two Moro refugees are currently working with a team of linguists at the University of California in San Diego. These scientists practice 'field linguistics', the branch of linguistics that focuses on inductive fieldwork based on actual examples of language in text or recording. This branch was meant to provide evidence of 'natural' or 'raw' language as opposed to the speculation of 'armchair linguistics' and meant to uncover 'the

grammar' of a language. Summarising Blommaert (2005: 12-19), the approach carried certain beliefs:

1. The native speaker's own opinions cannot be trusted – only the linguist can master 'the grammar'.
2. Working with illiterate informants 'advocates strict naturalness'.
3. The linguist elicits forms and is in charge of all the analysis.
4. Learning and understanding comes from the written notes of linguists – not from texts produced by informants.
5. A new code is used – the code of professional linguists including words, morphemes, syllables, phonemes, roots, affixes, etc. – the units of language rather than phrases and text.

The Moro Language Project in San Diego seeks to produce 'A Grammar of Moro (*ḍamwareṇa*)' employing a phonetic transcription rather than the established Moro alphabet. On its website the researchers express concern that the data they seek to document is at risk: 'Population movement and the current development of a standard form by the Moro Language Committee in Khartoum may contribute to dialect shifting, making our research all the more urgent' (<http://moro.ucsd.edu>). In a race against time and language change and even loss, these linguists are trying to document Moro, that is, anything but 'the language' as identified by the Moro Literacy Committee. To do so, they use neither the spelling system nor the punctuation that Moro speakers know but rather descriptive tools and notation conventions specific to the craft of linguistics.

Linguistic notation does serve a useful purpose. It helps linguists analyse the details of grammar, which in turn serves to better understand typological comparisons, linguistic change, and history, interests that the Moro people share. This approach is based in a paradigm which 'adopts a positivist tone of scientific investigation. This model to nationalism tends to objectify and naturalise language, i.e., treats it as a natural entity. This epistemic orientation defines language as an organism' (Abdelhay 2010: 203). Fixing 'the language' in such a way appeals to the order of iconicity but for the 'wrong' language. The language data of the San Diego team comes from two speakers of the Latobɛrenda dialect, which no Moro would claim is the most 'original' language nor the medium for communication with God,

and certainly not the language of tribal unity. Furthermore, one of the informants was raised in Khartoum and the other went to Khartoum at age ten. Neither of these speakers would be considered an 'expert' Moro speaker by the standards of the Moro Literacy Committee, their language likely adulterated by Arabic (and English) and a lack of contact with Moro people for a long time. I discussed this with the Committee and showed some of them the web page. Responses included:

- What I want to know is, who are these people? I don't recognise them. Who are the researchers and why are they working on this dialect?
- What I think is, if we have these people working on Ləŋorəban, on Tobəŋelda, then we have Lebu also wanting their own grammar, then that's it, every group goes its own way. The important thing is a good orthography. It is too early for this. We are still trying to sort out the roots, what comes from where, know our history... The only thing left to unite the Lemwareng is the language. In times of SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics), we had all the groups coming together, singing together, if they don't know the songs they listen. We all praised the heroes together. We [...] congratulate ourselves by uniting the Lemwareng through this literacy programme... They should think of creating something, e.g., how all seven clans can speak one language.
- I don't understand why they don't consult us, what *we* want. I'm working for years on this, we want a language that unifies us. After the last war, we struggled to unite, we struggled to come together, and now we have done it and these guys go... this will ruin things.

The Committee sees these linguists' focus on a particular dialect as a serious threat to the literacy programme as well as undermining their authority on the language. There is a basic contradiction between the professional goal of the linguists, which is descriptive, theoretical and comparative work based on 'the grammar',¹¹ and the interests of

¹¹ Blommaert 2005 and Silverstein 2003 take issue with linguistic methods for producing grammars – reduced, simplified rules for language conforming to a

the Committee which takes a constructivist approach and wants 'the language' to be a symbolic as well as a functional tool to maintain Moro cultural integrity. In spite of this seeming clash of interests, both parties work from the ideology of iconicity; the debate thus sustains the order.

Linguistic Realities

Texts and technologies of speaking are ordering mechanisms. The Moro literacy programme has created a set of texts and speaking styles (letters, newspapers, Bible, hymns, teacher and student roles, cassettes, sermons, etc.) which influence the way Moro speak, interact and – potentially – think about themselves. Language which was thought of as something a person is born with is now a topic of instruction. As I have detailed, several sets of actors are engaged in negotiations over 'the language': linguist-missionaries, Moro religious elites, literacy activists, community members and professional linguists. They have all invested in putting knowledge into writing, but they differ as to how this is done and to what end, emphasising concepts such as 'original', 'pure', 'natural', 'modern' and 'correct' to different extents. What is evident in the events described in this chapter is that 'the language' is in constant negotiation.

With the increased politicisation of the Moro ethnic identity, the somewhat arbitrary synthetic combination of Moro dialects has solidified in importance as a symbol of Moro ethnic identity. It is not 'the language' that is stable but the order of iconicity that has endured. Language changes but the iconic ideology of one people with one language as a reality stabilises. This order validates the continued efforts around 'the language' and makes it interesting to people, worthy of concern and attention. That language is represented textually, through a literacy regime, is validating. It has a name, its own grammar, can be compared with other self-contained systems of language, and is a textual object which can be linked with a number of speakers, a place on a map and a 'tribe'. Different people raise critiques and the Moro Literacy Committee is relatively flexible in responding. For

codified format rather than a realistic representation of the language. The product of linguistic work is a text which can only be accessed by other linguists with little or no use to the people who speak it.

example, when 'the language' is seen to be too much a product of the Church, or when it does not represent all the dialect groups, including those spoken by Muslims. It is less flexible, however, when interests run counter to the dominant discourse on a common Moro ethnic identity.

A last but nonetheless significant set of actors constitutes the most serious critique of the literacy regime, because it questions the order of iconicity. While 'the language' is known by most every Moro person, its validity is nonetheless contested by some who do not engage in literacy practices. I was teased on a number of occasions by Moro women when I spoke the Moro of literacy in the context of the home. For example, when saying the noun 'food' *aceba* according to the written standard, I was laughed at by a housewife who repeated her own dialectal pronunciation as *acewa*, which was corrected to *aceba* by a language student sitting with us.

As stated in the introduction, for those not tuned into literacy, the idea of correctness may not exist, but 'incorrect' dialectal pronunciations provoke lots of giggling. Another real phenomenon is the process of dialect-levelling. Observation of speaking practices in Omdurman among different groups reveals strategies of accommodation and code-switching, which is when people adjust their language to that of others, either to make themselves understood, or as a mark of solidarity. This means that an orientation towards 'the language' is not the only process going on. For example, a woman from Serf al-Jamoos is married to a man of El Lebu and her language is mixed, a fact which again causes people to laugh. This and the above example suggest that dialectical orientation is still considered the implicit norm in some contexts.

Clearly, the speech community is heterogeneous. One informant says: 'In church, they're jumping between three languages. You'll confuse people. There are people who don't know Arabic or English, they will miss the point, paralyse the message, they'll be flowing from idea to idea.' This common monolingual ideology is contradicted by abundant linguistic evidence that people can quite skilfully manipulate more than one language in interaction, a phenomenon called 'code-switching', without any loss of comprehension. Tribal unity through language iconicity is not a seamless uni-directional event, but an ideology. Abdelhay (2010: 201) points out that 'in conflict-ridden

areas such as the Sudan, the “local” can strategically reproduce the state-ideological understanding of language as a bounded codified community code, as a result of internalising the rules of the game.’ That a number of language communities of the Nuba Mountains have sprung up to standardise their linguistic resources through language and literacy programmes exemplifies this (e.g., see Manfredi (forthcoming)). They are imitating the Khartoum regime’s model of nationalism – that a delimited group of people should be represented by one language, and that some forms of language are more legitimate than others. The validity of a language is linked to who it is meant to represent. In the Moro language case, the mutability of ‘the language’ was essential to its sustained importance as a reference for ‘the people’.

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Competing Forms of Land Use and Incompatible Identifications of Who Is to Benefit from Policies in the South of the North: Pastoralists, Agro-Industry and Farmers in the Blue Nile Region

Günther Schlee

The core of this paper consists of one example of land use, in itself rather complex, namely mostly Fulbe pastoralism in interaction with other forms of land use in eastern Sudan. Thereby, it covers a pastoralist system which extends beyond the Blue Nile State in its present boundaries. It stretches into much of what now is Sennar State, and also Gedaref State is part of overlapping cycles of pastoral migration. The 'Blue Nile area' in the sense employed here basically refers to the area which is or was frequented seasonally or occasionally by pastoralists we met and interviewed in the Sennar /Damazin region. Many pastoral routes used to cross the boundary of what, since July 2011, is the independent state of South Sudan. Problems relating to the new political situation are far from solved.

The area comprises flood retreat cultivation areas, irrigation areas, and areas suitable for rain-fed agriculture. Towards the north, rain-fed agriculture is increasingly risky. Farmers might plough and seed but still have no harvest, because the rains fail locally or in a wider area. When the long-term ecological damage caused by this form of land use outweighs the short-term and insecure profits derived from it, we are approaching the ecological boundary of rain-fed agriculture.

These types of land use have coexisted for a long time in the area and in different periods of its political history different forms of regulation evolved. In the colonial period, integrated plans tried to combine pastoralists' rights of access to water points, markets and uncultivated lands with agriculture. Although agriculture had a clear development priority, rangelands and key resources like access routes to water were reserved for nomads. Had these not been kept free, the productivity of the overall system would have been adversely affected, since taking a relatively small but essential element (like access to the

river at a watering point) out of a pastoral system can reduce the utility of other parts of the system, including vast areas which are useless for agriculture anyhow. To increase the productivity of the overall economy, pastoral and agricultural interests need to be reconciled, and this is what the British, who do not seem to have identified too much with one or the other side, did with a measure of success. An example of these attempts at integrating different forms of land use in planning is the mapping of corridors for pastoral movements in the Blue Nile state. The range officers in whose office I photographed such a map explained that while these corridors had never been formally abolished, for a long time they have not been effectively enforced against agricultural encroachment.

A Chronology of the Changing Politico-military Alliances of the Fulbe in the Blue Nile Area

There are many examples which could be used to illustrate conflicting forms of land use, often along ethnic lines of division. In this chapter I focus on the Fulbe and their neighbours, whom I studied with different co-authors (Dereje Feyissa and later Elhadi Ibrahim Osman). Similar patterns can be found if one takes another entry point, say the Arab Rufa'a al-Hoi (Ahmed 1974, 2008). In both cases, new types of land use, mainly mechanised agriculture, played a major role, and both groups were affected by the politicisation of ethnicity, nationality and citizenship as the split between Sudan and South Sudan took place. The Rufa'a managed to some extent to preserve their agency. They made their own arrangements with regard to the acquisition of pasture rights through payments or by changing military alliances. However, in other cases and in certain periods they may be regarded as victims of a process of political fission, which was not in their interest and which was driven by 'elites' who did not care about their interests. As the Rufa'a al-Hoi case has been admirably covered by Abdel Ghaffar Muhammad Ahmed (1974, 2008), we here focus on the Fulbe and their neighbours.

Dereje and Schlee (2009) describe the seasonal movements of Fulbe from Sinja and its environs as the northern turning point to the more humid regions in the south, where they used to spend the dry season. Until the 1990s there were two options. One was to move

straight south into the vicinity of Nuer and Dinka. If that was too risky, because the relationships with these groups and their militias were at a low point, the other option was chosen, namely to branch off to the east into Ethiopia. Accounts of experiences with pastoral Fulbe have been collected from three states in Ethiopia: Beni Shangul, Oromia (western Wollega region) and Gambella. The Ethiopian option was eventually closed because local livestock keepers complained about the competition for pasture and the strain on it caused by 'Mbororo' (here used as a generic name for all pastoral Fulbe) cows, which are regarded as fast eaters, fast movers and demanding in terms of quantity. Other factors had to do with international politics.

Forced to find arrangements on the Sudanese side, some Fulbe groups paid their way, buying peace often without getting it. Others joined southern forces in alliances of tribal militias.

On the whole, the Fulbe, who had the reputation of being peaceful and evasive, avoiding conflict by moving on whenever their presence seemed to trouble others, gradually adopted a more assertive stance, seeking to reach the same level of armament as everyone else around them (Osman 2009). In the Sudanese civil war, which ended with the Naivasha Peace Agreement (also known as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)) in 2005, a number of Fulbe militias fought for the northern Sudanese cause. They received arms and official identification cards as militia members. They also became part of the Sudanese version of a welfare system. They were good payers of *zakāh* or alms and received much in return, in case of impoverishment or losses through armed violence. So they identified themselves and were identified with the north.

A personality called Salih Bank became a hero of local folklore. He started his career as a militia leader in Southern Kordofan, but there his basis of recruitment (exclusively Fulbe) was numerically not so strong. So in the 1990s he transferred his activities to the Blue Nile area where there were more Fulbe. His militia bore the name *katība mā yanūm*, literally 'militia that does not lie down'. The men fought upright and did not lie down to take cover in a gun battle, because they thought that some magic had made them bulletproof.¹ Salih Bank died of a gunshot in 2002.

¹ The belief in magic against gunfire, known from the history of the colonial conquest (e.g., the Maji Maji rebellion in German East Africa (Tanganyika

Since the CPA in 2005 some Fulbe groups sought alliance with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) which was the party in power in the southern Sudan (the future independent South Sudan). It also was a legally recognised party in the north with a substantial membership of diverse origins, northerners and southerners alike. Besides, the office of the *wali* (governor) rotated between the SPLM/A and the National Congress Party (NCP) on a power-sharing basis. So seeking an arrangement with the SPLM/A made good sense.

With the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, these arrangements came to an abrupt end. Fulbe and other 'northern' nomads were expelled from South Sudan and flooded into Blue Nile State. Then violence erupted there and Blue Nile State, just like South Kordofan farther to the west and for very similar reasons, turned into the scene of a new war. The president of Sudan had deposed the legally elected *wali* of Blue Nile State, Malik Agar, an Ingessana Muslim and representative of the SPLM. The entire party was declared a southern party and as illegal in the north. Malik Agar was replaced by a military person but refused to resign. The northern army moved in and civilians fled the fighting. At the time of writing (originally March 2012, but the same held true one year later) the military situation was still unresolved. Malik Agar held the Ingessana hills and possibly other areas.

/Tanzania), seems to have survived a century of colonisation and development cooperation, as also Seignobos observes with reference to a pastoral Fulbe militia, the *gaw*, against 'Zargina' bandits in the Central African Republic. Also the description of Fulbe as skilful archers resonates with what we are going to find in the present paper, while the general association of Fulbe with magic has also been found by Dereje and Schlee (2009). Seignobos's findings have resonances across Africa. Here is the full quotation: 'Général Ooji, avec sa vingtaine de lieutenants, se trouve à la tête d'une armée de 500 à 600 archers, jeunes Mbororo plus ou moins dépenaillés, portant turban (*metaaleenwol*) et casquette Nike. Comme les bergers, ils disposent souvent d'une gourde-calebasse (*jollooru*) au poignet. Ils ont un peu la même allure que les Zargina, mais ils opèrent à visage découvert. En revanche, ils ne disposent pas d'armes automatiques, mais seulement d'arcs, un compromis entre l'arc à double courbure du Nord et l'arc des Mbum avec des flèches empoisonnées. Ils en réfèrent à leur "blindage", appelé également anti-corps, et au pouvoir surnaturel dont ils se sentent investis. Les récits des *gaw* dans leur lutte contre les Zargina laissent percevoir ce besoin de "merveilleux", mais devant leurs résultats sur le terrain, on doit abandonner toutes prétentions explicatives. On a cru l'Afrique centrale purgée de ses croyances par un siècle de colonisation et de coopérations diverses, elle se retrouve quasi intacte, protégée des balles par ses phylactères et ses gris-gris.' (Seignobos 2008: 32).

In a recent development (ongoing research by Elhadi I. Osman) Mbororo Fulbe pastoralists who were encroaching on mechanised farms northwest of Damazin were given arms by the security committee of the Blue Nile State (or the part of it under 'northern' control) to enable them to enforce their claims to use pastures in 'rebel' territory (i.e., the territory held by the elected government). They did as they were told, but when they later came back, the Khartoum-affiliated Blue Nile State government itself perceived them as a threat and demanded the return of their guns. Many refused to comply and moved on, with arrangements of their own and fortified by the guns in their possession, into South Sudan and, for the first time since the early 1990s, into Ethiopian territory. One route described to Elhadi I. Osman was via Ma'aban County (Upper Nile State, South Sudan) via Nazir (Unity State [sic], South Sudan) to Gambella (Ethiopia).

Not only mobile livestock production is affected by resurgence of war in Blue Nile State. The same is true of other forms of food production. Large-scale farmers, who hold one or several government leases of 1,000 feddan called 'projects' (*mašārī*) have not been able to harvest their crops. In March 2012, there were crops from the last growing season standing. Sorghum was unlikely to fall out, but sesame, a sensitive crop, was already lost. In some areas farmers could reach their fields but then faced the problem of labour shortage, because the groups from which they used to recruit labour had fled the area (cf. Abdulkarim in this volume). In such situations, farmers might resort to mechanised harvesting, but that entails losses of about 50 per cent. The reason for this is that the varieties grown have not been bred for mechanised harvesting which would require a fairly uniform height. The 50 per cent actually harvested tend to be of poor quality and fetch lower prices because they are mixed with fragments of stem (ʿAwaḍ Karīm, a lecturer in agriculture, on 12 March 2012).

By-products of grain are farm residues, like ears which have fallen on the ground, the dried stalks left on the field and weeds. These used to be eaten by livestock, and whether the livestock owners should pay for this, or whether the dung of the animals is enough in terms of reciprocity as tradition has it, is a matter of controversy. In recent years farmers have often brought in their own cows. Now, however, for security reasons, there is no livestock at all to be found in many areas

of the Blue Nile State. Crop residues are not put to any productive use at all (ʿAwaḍ Karīm, 12 March 2012). From another source (Yasīn al-Ḳayr, a farmer, Sinja, on 13 March 2012) we learned about some roundabout way in which farmers dare to access their fields. They then carry out the harvest by employing Ingessana labour exclusively.

Food prices rose and the shortage of grain was worsening. It was already foreseeable that many of the ‘mechanised’² farmers in the Blue Nile State would not till their *mašārīʿ* in 2012, which would add to the previous year’s losses. The crisis was reflected in food prices. In one year the price of a sack of sorghum (90 kg) had gone up from 80 or 100 to 150 Sudanese pounds (SDG), that of sesame from 100 to 250 SDG. By-products of the food industry, like sesame cake which is used as livestock feed, had become more expensive. That would lead to higher prices for milk and meat (ʿAwaḍ Karīm, 12 March 2012).

On a more localised level, Osman and Schlee (2014) have analysed a conflict between Hausa and Fulbe in a cluster of villages just west of the reservoir behind the Roseires dam. In a broader African perspective this is an atypical conflict. More frequently one finds conflicts phrased in a terminology of ‘autochthonous’ or ‘sons of the soil’ versus ‘newcomers’. Here we find a constellation which sounds like northern Nigeria in the early nineteenth century, namely Hausa against Fulbe, but we are still in the Sudan and both groups are present there, and have been present there, in smaller numbers for a long time, in larger numbers since the British conquest of northern Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century, with some later in-migration. Here, Hausa represent the sedentary villagers, without, however, the ability to claim to be ‘autochthonous’ – a claim made by villagers throughout Africa.³ The conflict with the nomadic Fulbe is about the widespread issue of fields blocking the access of cattle to the river and cattle causing crop damage. At least so it seems. Some fields, however, appear to have been located in a way that crop damage must ensue in order to provoke an escalation of tension. In West Africa such fields, tilled not to obtain a harvest but to block a nomadic route or to claim

² Abdel Ghaffar calls them semi-mechanised. Ploughing is done by tractor but weeding and harvesting normally by manual labour.

³ See Dafinger and Pelican 2002, Bourgeot 1999, and Diallo and Schlee 2000.

compensation for crop damages, are known as *champs pièges*.⁴ So, committing and provoking crop damage is not just the cause of conflict but also an expression of deeper conflict.

Technically, the violence makes use of a curious mixture of 'traditional' and 'modern' implements. Elhadi I. Osman and I found the Fulbe of one large hamlet busy preparing arrows, poisoned and non-poisonous ones (for pictures see Schlee 2012: 74) to defend themselves against Hausa in the neighbouring village. The Hausa have mobilised thugs on motorbikes to intimidate the Fulbe. When they have to slow down to cross a sandy stretch, like a dried-up stream, they present targets for Fulbe archers. So technologies of quite different ages are used against each other.

While one finds instances of the conflict being between 'first settlers' or 'autochthons' and 'newcomers' also in the Sudan, the conflict configurations cannot be reduced to that dichotomy. Often an area is referred to as *dār*, 'homeland', of a certain nomadic group, which by now may only be partly nomadic. Due to a political climate which favours large-scale farmers, wherever they may come from, the land rights and routes of access to essential resources of these nomadic groups, the 'original owners' of the area, are completely ignored. In such cases 'autochthony' cannot and does not need to be claimed by the farmers, while appeals to it by the nomads, who may have some claim to it, are useless.

Recent Developments

Currently, with a Chinese contractor, works are being done to heighten the Roseires dam by nine metres. This will lead to major changes upriver and downriver from the dam. The reservoir behind the dam will expand greatly and submerge permanently areas which are now settled, used for flood-retreat cultivation and, beyond that, areas used as pastures or for rain-fed agriculture. Villagers are prepared for that, because the present locations of their villages were chosen when the dam was built in 1966. Already then they were told that the dam would later be heightened and that the coastline would change again.

⁴ See Amadou 1999: 333 and Moutari 1999: 431.

As an illustration of life with a changing coastline, I propose the following excerpts from our field notes (Schlee 2012).

Maganza



Figure 1: The sheikh of Maganza

From Ufud we moved on, northward again, around a bay of the lake, to Maganza village. There we stopped at the compound of the sheikh. While we waited for him, being served teas and lunch, we noted the features of the compound of a village sheikh: a large granary and a generator (for pictures see Schlee 2012: 79-80).

Maganza is a village with a Gumuz majority and the sheikh is Gumuz. He explains how the village has been relocated in the same area three times in the course of the twentieth century, in 1916, in 1943 (?) because of natural floods and in 1966 because of the rise of the water level after the construction of the dam. In 1966 when their grandfathers decided to move to the present location, they were told that they would not be able to stay there, as the dam would be heightened and the water level would rise by 10 metres. So they said: 'Let us settle there until that happens!' (They were right, because the village now has enjoyed over forty years of proximity to the water and access to riparian garden land, and having to build new thatch and mud houses farther up one day is a fair price for that.)

This is a truly multilingual village. The Gumuz language seems to be rather dominant here. Also non-Gumuz children learn Gumuz. The sheikh speaks Arabic, Gumuz, Hausa and Ingessana. He is aware that most Gumuz live in Ethiopia and that many of them are Christians.⁵ In the western area, however, also in Ethiopia there are Muslim Gumuz. They mix with the Beni Shangul and Berta.⁶

⁵ On Gumuz in Ethiopia, see Abbute 2004, 2009.

Although the change of the shoreline will not come as a surprise, in view of the present complex situation of land claims, often contested by rivals and complicated by habitual and formal arrangements of tenancy, the transfer of the whole mosaic nine metres up in altitude and dozens of kilometres to the west, where higher ground is located, does not look like an easy task.

The dam's downstream effect will be even more dramatic. It will be possible to transform the entire area between Damazin and Khartoum to the west of the Blue Nile into what its northern part, the Gezira, is already now: a gigantic irrigation scheme. The material interests associated with this enterprise are so strong that it would be futile even to consider proposing to maintain a pastoral use of the land. But beyond all irrigation schemes, there is open range. With the expansion of irrigation schemes, it will recede very far but still be there. And at the other side of the schemes, there is the river and along it the major road to urban centres. Inevitably, the expansion of the irrigation schemes will replace pastoralism (and rain-fed agriculture) on the surfaces that will be irrigated, but care should be taken that it does not unnecessarily obstruct and harm pastoralism beyond the confines of the schemes.

An overall land use plan will have to be devised which will provide livestock corridors from essential water points to grazing areas and maybe, if these trajectories become too long, grazing or fodder production areas at halfway points. Corridors and holding grounds for

⁶ The fact that they are Muslims, adjacent to other non-Arab Muslims on the Ethiopian side, and have a longer presence in the area gives these Gumuz a quite different standing from the Gumuz in the southern reaches of Gedaref State to the northeast. There they are at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy. They are invariably identified as 'Ethiopians'. They are regarded as unbelievers (*keuffār*), or Christians, which corresponds with reality in so far as many of them actually adhere to traditional beliefs and practices and others have converted to Christianity, while few of them are Muslims. As recent and undocumented immigrants from Ethiopia they can be easily exploited as cheap labour. This contrasts with the situation of the Gumuz in the Blue Nile State where they hold collective land rights which, as Elhadi I. Osman (2013) describes, allows them even to rent out land to others and receive payments. A differentiating factor may also be that the Gumuz villages in Blue Nile State are, regardless of other components which make up the ethnic mix there, part of a wider Gumuz settlement area which extends into Ethiopia, while the Gedaref Gumuz are a kind of diaspora, separated from their home areas in Ethiopia by the Dinder National Park (conversation with Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem on 11 March 2012).

fattening will also have to be considered in a system of marketing to provision with livestock exiting urban centres and new ones that will spring up in the irrigated areas. This livestock will have the advantage of not having been kept on expensive irrigated land all year round but having used the cheaper and possibly healthier resources of the open range (no insecticides, no herbicides, no artificial fertilizers). If one looks at what has happened to the existing livestock corridors, as mentioned previously, the hope for such an integrated economic policy appears rather grim.

Already the loss of the open range and the obstruction of passage through the former livestock corridors have separated herds with herdsmen from the main hamlets. These herders do not know how to get back to the other part of their families before getting stuck or 'settled'.

For a long time it was customary for nomads to make use of the residues left on farms after harvest, when there was not only unobstructed movement but also fodder along the way. Close to the margins of the belt where rain-fed agriculture is possible, farmers engage in a gamble: one year they may have a harvest, in another year not. Pastoralists from afar and villagers from nearby would then move in with their herds and let them feed on the crops which dried up before the grain matured or on whatever had grown there. Nowadays, however, the large-scale tenants of mechanised farming schemes behave like owners to whom everything on the leased land belongs. These farmers even charge nomads fees for the natural vegetation in areas for which they have paid the land rent but which they have not tilled at all. Other farmers stock their own cattle to make use of whatever has grown on the land they regard as theirs. The former symbiotic relationship between farmers and herders, in which the dung left by the animals was considered to be enough payment for what the cows had eaten, no longer exists.⁷

A new, purely monetary system can easily be imagined, in which some people specialise on cattle, keep a limited area permanently occupied, and for part of the year move around more widely. These transformed pastoralists, or whoever chooses this economic niche,

⁷ In Gunnar Sørbo's book about Halfa Jadida (Sørbo 1985) one can find a description of these older arrangements. For West Africa, the classical reference would be Fricke 1969.

would be using crops which have not matured or harvest residues belonging to others who have specialised on plant production rather than animal production and pay them for the pasture. For another part of the year they would buy fodder from people who would have grown it to sell it to them. It is not difficult to think of such arrangements, but they have not yet evolved. A big question of course is how such a complete commercialisation of pastoral inputs would affect the price of meat. Would pastoralists not have to demand a price few urban consumers would be able to pay, just to cover all these costs? The answer depends in part on how much wealth will be generated by other sectors of the Sudanese economy and how widely it will be distributed to provide the urban masses with purchasing power. Both the production of wealth and its fair distribution appear to be problems in the Sudan.

For the time being, mobile livestock producers have to cope with a rather hostile socio-political environment. The legal situation is unclear, not only because many people circumvent the law, but also because it becomes debatable what the law is. If range officers try to keep livestock corridors open but are told by their superiors not to bother, then what is the official position on this matter? If a governor and his ministers themselves grow crops in reserved forests or on livestock corridors, and if then the news goes around that the regulations concerning livestock corridors have been 'suspended' or 'abolished', does this amount to a change of the law (assuming that the *walī* has the power to change it), or is it a breach of law (assuming that the *walī* does not have the power to change it)? And what is a law good for if no one enforces it and it is not defended in court? The question of the reality of the law versus the letter of the law can turn somewhat philosophical in such a situation.

But herders muddle through. A huge area of great importance for pastoralists from both banks of the Blue Nile is Dinder National Park, which for a long time has been used in different ways. When the roads are passable and visitors come, the park is strictly controlled. But in rainy weather, even four-wheel drive vehicles would get stuck. The guardians of the park then do what is wise to do when obstacles cannot be overcome. They withdraw. Their headquarters are in Dinder town, some hundred kilometres to the north of the park, and that is where they spend the rainy season. Kenaana cattle herders then move

into the park with their herds. On one occasion we heard a complaint from them, but it was not about police control being too strict. It was about Fulbe pastoralists having been there before them and having finished off the best pastures.

According to customary or local law, pastoralists have a poor standing compared to sedentary farmers in cases of mediation. For example, when crop damage is regulated, local chiefs tend to side with the farmers and the elders in the assessment committees are farmers.⁸ Pastoralists then have to pay. Few of them take the matter to state courts. But when they do, they sometimes win.

Elhadi I. Osman collected a story about a pastoralist who was expelled by a state minister from what the minister claimed to be his farm. His animals were handled roughly and some of them were wounded. The court ruled in favour of the pastoralist. The minister had to allow his herd back in and compensate for the damage his workers did to the animals. The application of the law is not always power sensitive. Sometimes courts do deliver justice.

More often, however, nomads have to pay for all sorts of things. In our field notes (Schlee 2012: 100-104) we published photographs of identification (ID) cards issued by the Native Administration of different states. On crossing a boundary within northern Sudan one has to pay a fee to get another ID, a membership card of the ruling party, a membership card in the Pastoral Association, a receipt for livestock tax, and a receipt for a contribution to the Jihad Call Organisation, issued in 2009, when there was deep peace and no jihad. In addition nomads, when found on land claimed by someone, had to buy pasture from the 'owners' of the land. Mostly the 'owners' are urban entrepreneurs who paid a fee to convert land to mechanised grain production and now sell the residues after harvest, the immature crops – if the lack of rainfall prevented the crop from ripening –, or

⁸ Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem (ongoing Ph.D. research about 'Identification and conflict in Gedaref state, Eastern Sudan: Resource contestation, livelihood transformation and ethnic polarization') has observed cases in which farmers bribed the committees that did the crop damage assessments so as to be able to charge the pastoralists extravagant sums. The 'culprit' animals in the meantime were kept in the police enclosure for stray animals and were only released after the damage was paid. The police also made a profit by charging the nomads daily rates for keeping the animals in these enclosures. It was obligatory to register cases of crop damage with the police before consulting the committee, so that they would not miss such opportunities.

even the natural vegetation, if in a dry year they had not even attempted to grow a crop. There is a whole arsenal to extract money from nomads. Monetisation of food production inputs may be an inevitable global trend. Indeed, higher costs would not be a problem, if food prices would rise proportionally. But this requires buying power to be generated elsewhere in the economy, and this does not take place sufficiently. Wage earners in Khartoum already complain about high meat prices and every year at the time of *ʿīd al-ʿaḍḥā*, when every household slaughters a ram, the prices of these animals reach a new record and are a topic of discussion. Both producers and consumers are feeling the squeeze.

The central government in Khartoum has issued directives that its former allies, the Rufaʿa and Fulbe nomads who can no longer seasonally move into what now is South Sudan, be given back some of the former rangelands, namely 10 per cent of each registered mechanised farming ‘project’ and 40 per cent of the unregistered projects (which are located in a zone where, from a legal point of view, they should not be in the first place). Recent interviews (field report by Elhadi I. Osman, September 2012) show that the state government of Sennar, comprising large-scale land ‘owners’ or personalities closely connected with them, does its best to obstruct this redistribution.

Nonetheless, for the agro-pastoralists along the Blue Nile, the economic and social consequences of the blocked access to South Sudan, resulting from expulsion from South Sudan and the ongoing war in Blue Nile State, are likely to be minor in comparison to the displacement resulting from the heightening of the Roseires dam and the reallocation of land. While their village lands are already being flooded, local authorities, like the above-mentioned sheikh of Maganza, are still waiting for compensation and the relocation of services like schools and dispensaries. Much of the land on and beyond the new coastline has already been allocated to large-scale investors. The rhetoric of politicians does not support villagers’ expectations of resuming to farm elsewhere. Politicians praise agro-industrial development and depict a rosy future for the villagers as wage labourers.

This leads to the question of identification and alliances. Decision makers act in their own interests and in the interests of those with whom they identify according to shrinking or widening definitions of

the groups to which their cost-benefit analyses apply. Alternatively, they act in the interest of their allies, i.e. individuals and groups whom they do not regard as the same as or similar to themselves but whom they need to consider in their strategies. When, after the completion of the Aswan dam in 1971, Lake Nasser flooded the lands of the Nubian Farmers of Wadi Halfa, these were compensated in New Halfa in eastern Sudan with irrigation land. Farmers who lost their farms were given new farms. In the case of the villagers whose lands are being flooded by the heightening of the Roseires dam, there is no compensation. Rather it is envisaged that they will become wage labourers. Even this small prospect is merely a vague promise in view of the heavy reliance on machinery in 'modern', oily agriculture.

What is the difference between the Nubians, on the one hand, and the Hausa, Gumuz, and Ingessana on the other? I would look for an answer in terms of identification. From the point of view of the Khartoum government, the Nubians are 'our people'. They are northern Sudanese. In fact, the 'Arabs' of the Nile valley must be of Nubian descent to a much larger extent than their Arabised genealogies imply. The villagers of the Blue Nile State, on the other hand, are 'Africans', 'black', 'southerners' (there is a special term for the south of the Blue Nile area, *sa'id*, to distinguish it from the south of the Sudan, *janūb*) or simply 'westerners' (*garāba*) or 'foreigners', a category often applied to Sudanese, for example when Darfurians are referred to as Chadians. Exclusion is the name of the game. They may bear the costs, but the benefits of economic change are meant to accrue to others. The local people of the Blue Nile area here are not regarded as part of the government's 'we-group' and not even as allies, because they might not vote for the ruling party.

Conclusion

The state or parts of the state in Sudan either identify with or enter into alliances with one or the other party in conflicts over resources. State agencies and their policies (as well as their actual practices which do not always conform to their policies) are often more beneficial for sedentary farmers and urban dwellers, from whom a larger proportion of the ruling class has been recruited. Those in power often also co-opt rich and entrepreneurial pastoralists. When it comes to

resource conflicts between farmers, namely small-scale farmers versus large-scale agro-industrialists, the agents of 'development' (privatisation, concentration of land ownership) may build incentive structures which secure the support of state agents.

In none of the studied cases – neither in dealing with the consequences of the closure of pastoral migration routes due to the new international boundary, nor in the land questions arising from heightening of the Roseiris dam and the expansion of agri-business in the irrigated sector, nor in the connection with the expansion of mechanized rain-fed agriculture – was state authority used effectively for the benefit of the whole population. The government also desisted from broadening the economic base, which a (hypothetical) state as a rational actor should do, if not for higher aims at least to improve its own taxable economy and increase its revenue. This would require economic integration which would allow different economic specialisations and different ecological adaptations and strategies to coexist for the benefit of overall co-existence and productivity. Such a policy has not been implemented in the cases under study.

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Small-scale Farming in Southern Gedaref State, East Sudan

Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem

Small-scale farmers all over the globe 'face a number of challenges with common dimensions' (Stringer, Twyman and Gibbs 2008: 235). These issues include rural depopulation, poverty, food insecurity, technological change, the effects of globalised markets, changes in political power and policy, direct farm subsidies, drought and climate change, land degradation, and desertification. Researchers dealing with the subject often differentiate between two types of challenges: socio-economic and political on the one hand and biophysical on the other, categories which ultimately overlap in terms of drivers and impacts. Challenges to small-farming are 'process based and an inherent part of the prevailing biophysical and globalized political-economic system' (Stringer, Twyman and Gibbs 2008: 235).

When it comes to realities on the ground, the available literature indicates that 900 million of the world's poor are small-scale farmers and agricultural labourers that live in rural areas all over the globe (Sahan 2013). In other words, poverty constitutes 'the single largest stress affecting small-scale farmers both in the South and North' (Stringer, Twyman and Gibbs 2008: 242).

Similarly, it has been concluded that 'problems of poverty, marginalisation and disempowerment connected to processes of globalisation have resulted in small-scale farmers in both the North and the South becoming the weakest players in the global market' (Stringer, Twyman, and Gibbs 2008: 238). A number of international movements and non-governmental organisations have been established to try to improve the socio-economic situations of small-scale farmers in the Global South. Poverty and the economic marginalisation of small-scale farmers in developing countries have become key issues in the agendas of organisations such as the 'fair trade movement'. Similarly, conditions of production, trade and consumption have been severely criticised, associated with the revival of concepts such as the moral

economy. In fact, ideas of a moral economy have become an important part of the global discourse on small-scale farming (Raynolds 2000; Shreck 2005; Desai and Potter 2008).

It appears as if the most outstanding challenges to small-scale farming are socio-economic and political in nature. Some scholars have focused on the issue of climate change and the extent to which it has begun to affect the activities of small-scale farmers across the globe. Some argue that climate change has already severely impacted small-scale farming in the Global South (Sokona and Denton 2001). Hence, issues such as drought and desertification have begun to attract more attention.

Taking this as point of departure, the main questions raised in this chapter are: what are the main challenges to small farmers in southern Gedaref state in Sudan? To what extent has the lack of wage labourers affected small-scale farming activities in the study area? And, what are the strategies adopted by farming communities in response to this problem? In providing an answer, the focus will be on the role played by village-based associations. Similarly, the role played by governmental administrative and political organisations at the village level (popular committees) will be scrutinised. Finally, the chapter will briefly examine the question of climate change and how it has affected small-scale farming activities in the study area.

Villages of the Basúnda locality council in south Gedaref state are the main units of analysis. Data was collected during my Ph.D. field-work conducted in southern Gedaref state from April 2011 to April 2012.¹ Participant observation, micro-census, interviews and narratives were employed as methods of data collection.

The chapter argues that the current situation of small-scale farming in south Gedaref state has been affected by challenges that are mostly socio-economic and political in nature. Nonetheless, biophysical

¹ My Ph.D. project is titled 'Identification and Conflict in Gedaref State, Eastern Sudan: Resource Contestation, Livelihoods Transformation, and Ethnic Polarization'. I would like to express my sincere acknowledgement to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany, for its academic as well as financial support, without which this work would not have been possible. In this respect, it should be mentioned that this chapter has benefited greatly from the detailed criticism and suggestions provided during one of the sessions of the regular colloquium organised by the Department of Integration and Conflict. That session was held on 19 December 2012. Without mentioning names, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the researchers of the Department.

factors, climate change in particular, have started to affect the situation but only to lesser degrees.

The chapter comprises an introduction, four sections and a conclusion. The first section introduces the study area, including its geography, population and economic activities. The second mentions the types of agriculture being practiced in the study area. The third provides a case of small-scale farming from one of the villages of Basúnda locality council in southern Gedaref state, which will be discussed and analysed in the fourth section. The conclusion sums up the chapter.

Introduction to the Study Area

The study area is called Basúnda locality council. It is located in the southernmost part of Gedaref state² and covers an area of 7,000 square kilometres. Its population is distributed in forty two villages, with 67,000 people according to the population census of 2008. This locality is a sub-unit of one of the ten administrative units of Gedaref state,³ namely Eastern El-Qalabat (see Map 1).

Before the 1970s, this area was called the East Rahad zone. As described by one of my informants: 'It was almost an unpopulated area, mostly occupied by wild animals.'⁴ Hunting animals and minor cattle herding were the main economic activities practised in the area at that time.

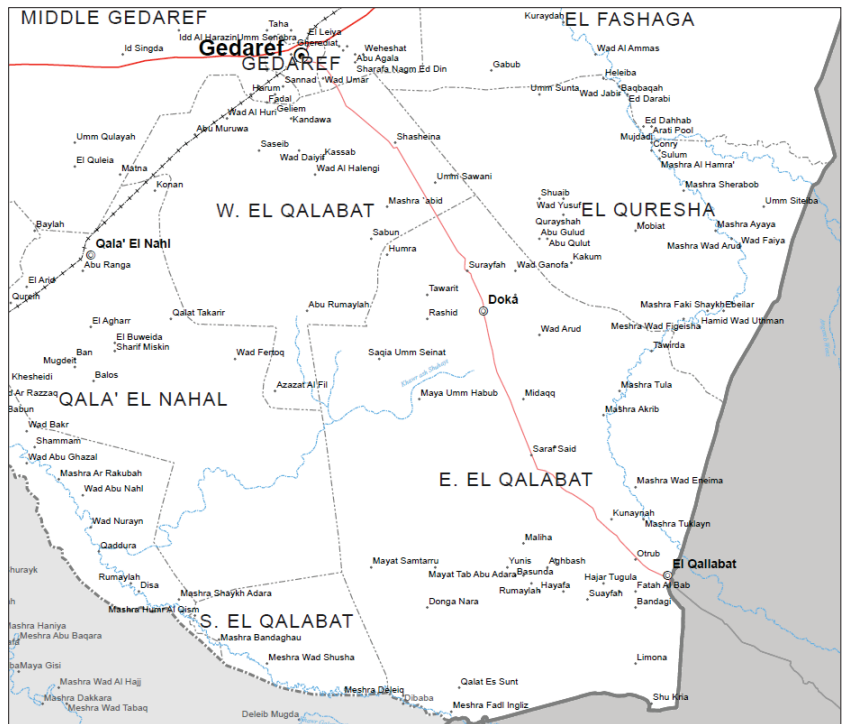
The area was under the administrative authority of the native administration of what was (and still is) called *naẓārat dār bakur*. In 1971, the governmental authorities ordered the *nāẓir* (paramount chief) of *dār bakur*, ʿAbd Allāhi Bakur, to send some of his people, who were living in different villages scattered around the Rahad area, to occupy this sparsely populated area of southern Gedaref. Currently this area is known as Basúnda locality council. The main purpose of

² According to Assal (2005: 177), 'Gedaref State is located in the eastern part of the country. It stretches between longitudes 34-36 E and latitudes 12-30 N. It lies between two tributaries of the Nile, the Rahad and Atbara Rivers.'

³ These ten administrative units cover a) the Butāna area in the northern part of the state; b) El Faw and Middle Gedaref, located in the central part of the state; and c) the southern part of the state, which comprises seven administrative units: El Fashaga, El Quresha, El Rahad, Qala' El Nahal, Eastern El Qalabat, Western El Qalabat and Southern El Qalabat.

⁴ Interview with ʿumda ʿAbd al-Karīm Adam Hassan, the geographical ʿumda of the East Rahad area, Gedaref market, 14 January 2012.

the relocation, alleges one of my informants, was to stop the influx of Ethiopians,⁵ which was significant during the late 1960s.



Map 1: Eastern El Qalabat (source: OCHA Gedaref State Administrative Map, March 2012)

A number of families, mostly of Western Sudanese and West African origin responded to the *nāẓir*'s appeal and began to migrate to these areas. To attract more settlers, the authorities allowed the *nāẓir* of *dār bakur* to grant licenses to settlers to formally establish new

⁵ What was said by my informant about the reason for urging the Western Sudanese and 'West Africans' to settle in southern Gedaref at that time reflects the story popularised by governmental authorities. The underlying reason could be related to the expansion of large-scale farming activities in south Gedaref state, which was controlled by the central government and some of its allies among the big merchants (known locally as *jallāba*) who were primarily from the northern Riverain Sudanese tribes. This analysis is supported by secondary literature produced at that time. For example, Shepherd (1983: 316) stated that 'the major benefits of mechanized farming have been appropriated by a relatively small class of wealthy jellaba merchants. This has not only reinforced the existing class structure of the Sudan, but has probably assisted the process of broadening the merchant class and its economic base – a feature of the Nimeri regime.'

villages in the area. A few years later, in 1977, the area was recognised as part of what was called Doka-Basúnda rural council. This rural council was part of a bigger administrative unit called the South Gedaref Council. It included six rural councils, namely Doka-Basúnda, Kassab al-Qurayša, Al-Faw, Al-Naḥal, Al-Mafaza and Al-Hawata. Two of these rural councils, namely Doka-Basúnda and Kassab al-Qurayša, were merged and placed under the administration of Gedaref town in 1979. In 1994, Sudan witnessed the introduction of a federal system. Consequently, all the above-mentioned rural councils were reorganised and conflated into one administrative unit called *muḥāfaẓat* al-Qalabāt. Finally, and since 2010, *muḥāfaẓat* al-Qalabāt is recognised as Basúnda locality council.

As regards its ethnic composition, a number of studies indicate that the Western Sudanese ethnic groups, particularly those of ‘African’ origins, together with the ‘West Africans’ constitute the majority of the population in south Gedaref state (Abu-Manga and Miller 2005; Assal 2005; Osman 2008). The Western Sudanese ethnic groups, or *al-ǧarāba* as they are identified in central Sudan, encompass the Fur, Masalit, and Borgo. Besides, other groups such as the Dajo, Zaghawa, Berti, Tama, and Tunjur are found in smaller numbers. In addition, members of other Western Sudanese groups that identify themselves as ‘Arabs’⁶ (e.g. the Salamat, Rashid, Ta’isha and Habbaniya) also live in this area. This large presence of Western Sudanese groups in southern Gedaref and eastern Sudan in general is mostly attributed to the establishment of large-scale mechanised and irrigated agriculture by the British colonial authorities since the 1920s and connected to the need for agricultural labourers (Duffield 1983; Shepherd 1983; Tully 1988).

Concerning the pastoral groups, the study area has been a constant grazing land, predominantly for cattle herders that visit the area after the harvest season. These groups include the Fulbe, Shukriya, Bani Amir, Lahawin, Rufa’a al-Shariq and Kenana Arabs.

⁶ The terms ‘Africans’, ‘Arabs’ and ‘West Africans’ are problematized and used cautiously in this chapter. This approach stems from two considerations. First, these terms have become subject to constant ethnic mobilisation in the recent history of the Republic of Sudan. Second, centuries of migrations across different Sudanese areas, the centre in particular, have been associated with integration performances (see Holt 1961, O’Fahey and Spaulding 1974).

Agricultural Activities in the Study Area

Agriculture and animal herding constitute the main economic activities in the study area. The main animals raised are cattle, sheep and goats. Agricultural activities are mechanised rain-fed (large-scale farming), traditional rain-fed (small-scale farming) and irrigated agriculture. The main agricultural products are sorghum, sesame, groundnut, cotton and sunflowers. Fishing and small businesses are also engaged in to some extent. In addition, horticulture is practiced at the Rahad River.

Large-scale Farming

Mechanised rain-fed or large-scale farming schemes were set up by the British administration in Gedaref in the 1940s. In 1968, the Mechanised Farming Corporation (MFC) was established (Shepherd 1983; Assal 2005) for 'the survey, demarcation and allocation of land to the private sector' (Assal 2005: 186). According to one of my informants, 'the role played by this corporation has always been in favour of big merchants or large-scale farming, which has expanded at the expense of small-scale farming in the area.'⁷ The data provided by the office of statistics in Basúnda locality council show that this area comprises 483 large-scale agricultural schemes which occupy around 662,000 *faddān* (278,040 hectares).⁸ The minimum size for schemes in this sector is 1,000 *faddān* (420 hectares).

Small-scale Farming

Small-scale farming is mostly performed by households in the villages, small merchants, and some civil servants attached to Gedaref state. The total area occupied by this activity is estimated at 280,000 *faddān* (according to the Office of Statistics in Basúnda locality council in 2011). Individual household farms range in size from 10 to 30 *faddān*. Locally known as *bildāt*, sing. *bilād*, these small farms surround the vacant areas around villages. As regards civil servants, the sizes of their farms range from 20 to 50 *faddān*. Small merchants, in contrast, may cultivate larger schemes of between 100 and 500 *faddān*.

⁷ Interview with ʿUṭmān Tāj ad-Dīn, a small-scale farmer from Tamara village. Babikri village, 12 January 2011.

⁸ 1 *faddān* = 0,42 hectares.

Horticulture

Horticulture is the only type of irrigated agriculture in the study area and is practiced by villagers next to the Rahad River. Mango, guava and lemon are the main products cultivated.

A Case of Small-scale Farming in South Gedaref State

ʿUṭmān Tāj ad-Dīn is a 60-year-old farmer from the Masalit ethnic group, who lives and practices small-scale farming in Tamara village in southern Gedaref state. As regards the season of 2011, he told me that he cultivated 30 *faddān* of sesame and five *faddān* of sorghum. In addition, his wife cultivated five *faddān* of groundnut⁹ with the assistance of the agricultural bank in Gedaref state. He sowed in July 2011 and was ready for the harvest in October 2011.

ʿUṭmān told me that he managed to harvest his sorghum with the assistance of his family members and relatives. However, he encountered a serious problem concerning the harvest of his 30 *faddān* farm of sesame. To put it in his words: ‘The main problem we encountered this season was the shortage and vast increase in the price of wage labour, particularly during the harvest season. The price of harvesting one *hilla*¹⁰ ranged from 17 to 20 Sudanese pounds (SDG).’

The farmer’s problem was solved through the assistance of one of the recently established associations in the village called the society of village development. This particular society was established to support women in the village. Its members consist of women able to work. Owing to the fact that his wife was a member of the association, the farmer benefited from its services without enormous financial strain. He was merely asked to pay a symbolic amount of money for the services he received. By relying on this association for help, ʿUṭmān solved the problem of expensive wage labour.

⁹ The kind of cultivation practised by the women in the village, in small gardens attached to the family housing compounds, is called *al-jubrāka* (the household garden). The focus is on simply-harvested yields that grow quickly.

¹⁰ The word *hilla* denotes a local unit of agricultural scaling, which is used in south Gedaref state to refer to a collection of 400 small bundles of cultivated sesame sticks. In this respect, it could be said that when the season is good, the production of 1 *faddān* yields roughly 7 to 10 *hilla*.

Analysis of the Case

Perhaps it is somewhat surprising that in a country like Sudan, the recent lack of wage labour is the most pressing problem that small-scale farmers encounter in southern Gedaref state. Western and southern Sudanese seasonal migrants¹¹ used to constitute the backbone of this labour force. One of my informants commented: 'We observed that since 2009 the number of southern Sudanese wage labourers began to decrease in our village. This number diminished dramatically after the referendum and the independence of South Sudan. Those few southerners you find in our village are engaged in commercial activities with the big merchants. There are no southern Sudanese wage labourers anymore.'¹² The independence of South Sudan which occurred on 9 July 2011 created a new situation for farmers in Gedaref. Their former southern Sudanese wage labourers overnight became citizens of a new nation.

Many of these people who used to work as wage labourers in Gedaref state moved to South Sudan, motivated by the euphoria of independence, the hope for social change in the new nation and fear of the Sudanese government's return to strict discriminative policies. Many discussions in that period in the popular places in Khartoum state were arguing that the vast amount of oil in South Sudan could end the misery of the southerners. In brief, the independence of South Sudan and the increasing political tensions between the two countries after independence contributed to a situation in which most southern Sudanese wage labourers opted to leave Gedaref after secession. As regards Western Sudanese wage labourers, most of them deserted small farming to participate in small-scale gold mining¹³, primarily in the Red Sea state in northeast Sudan. A report published by one of the gold mining companies in 2011 stated that 'more than 200,000 Su-

¹¹ These migrant agricultural labourers are called locally *jangujurū* (sing. *jangu*), particularly those of western and southern Sudanese ethnic backgrounds. My informants told me that the word might carry a negative connotation when used by 'others', i.e., those belonging to ethnic groups other than the western and / or southern Sudanese practising agricultural labour in the area.

¹² Interview with ʿUṭmān Tāj ad-Dīn, small scale-farmer from Tamara village. Babikri village, 12 January 2011.

¹³ Interview with Abakār Muḥammad Adam, small-scale farmer in Babikri village, 13 January 2011.

danese small-scale prospectors are now digging for gold around the country' (Baudzus 2011).

The scarcity of agricultural wage labourers in south Gedaref state led to rising prices for workers. According to my informants, between 2007 and 2010 wages ranged from 9 to 12 SDG for harvesting 1 *hilla*. They jumped to 20 SDG in 2011. My observations in the villages of southern Gedaref state indicate that wage labourers among settled Arab pastoralists, those from the Dinder area in particular, had begun to replace the traditional southern and western Sudanese wage labourers. In addition, Ethiopian immigrants to Sudan through Gedaref have been a constant source of agricultural wage labour in southern Gedaref state since the 1970s.

Another strategy to cope with the scarcity of wage labour in the study area was the establishment of village-based associations. As in the case from Tamara village, these associations helped small-scale farmers to deal with the problem of increased prices of wage labour. Four associations were established in the village in 2010. Only one of them is for women, and its tasks are mostly but not exclusively associated with problems that women encounter in the village. The other three associations, called *rawābiṭ taṭwīr al-qarya* (associations for village development), were considered to be for the men in the village. The main objective of these associations is to provide farmers with needed services during social occasions in the village. They also respond to needs pertaining to small-scale farming activities in the village.

According to my informants,¹⁴ the idea of establishing these associations was initiated by the villagers in 2009. The political authority at the village level (the popular committee) welcomed the idea and broadened it by inscribing other moral ideas into it, such as combatting moral deviance, alcohol drinking, theft and the like. In addition, other local governmental associations (e.g., *jama'iyāt šabāb al-waṭan*, the national youth association, and *jama'iyāt al-qur'ān al-karīm*,¹⁵ the Holy Qur'ān association) that had been established before

¹⁴ Interview with ʿUṭmān Tāj ad-Dīn, Babikri village, 12 January 2011.

¹⁵ These associations were established during the 1990s at the different administrative levels in the Sudan, with the proclaimed objective of providing social services. However, the associations have been strongly involved in political issues. They are means through which the Sudanese people have been recruited for joining or supporting the governing regime, the National Congress Party (NCP).

in the village were all assembled under the label 'the associations of village development'.

The farmers of the village were classified and registered as members of these associations. For example, while students and young people were registered as members in the national youth association, women were categorised as members of the women's association of the village, and so forth. The creation of these associations enabled villagers to deal with increased prices of wage labour. Communication between farmers and the managers of these associations is easy. However, I observed that social networking is an important factor in accessing the services of a specific association. For example, the farmer in our case benefited from the friendship of his wife with the leader of the women's association. That relationship facilitated his direct and easy access to that association in particular.

Prices of the services provided by these associations are below market prices, perhaps because their purpose, as far as the government – which provides support to the associations – is concerned, is to influence the farmers to support the policies of the ruling political party. The provision of below-market services could also be interpreted as an indirect agricultural subsidy. It is a common policy of governments to support agricultural development in the rural communities (Norton 2004). Yet, social relations among small-scale farmers in the Sudanese villages are not guided by economic rationality alone. Rather, my observations in the study area underline the old anthropological insight that issues such as kinship, social solidarity and cooperation still play a considerable role in determining social relations. This could be clearly observed during the harvest season. Unsurprisingly, the farmers and / or households living in the same neighbourhoods reciprocally assist each other.

A number of classical anthropological works carried out among small-scale farmers in Sudanese communities described these exchanges of labour (Barth 1970; Haaland 1972). Haaland refers to specific patterns of exchange, so-called beer-work parties. The living conditions in many villages in southern Gedaref suggest that small-scale farmers and agricultural labourers are among the poorest and most marginalised groups. The information provided by the micro-census I conducted among small-scale farmers in al-Fazara village indicates that the agricultural land owned by households is less than

25 *faddān* (10.5 hectares). In addition, small-scale farmers in the village hardly engage in livestock raising activities.

Likewise, while some basic services such as health care, clean water, schools and the like exist in the communities, they are quite rudimentary. For instance, al-Fazara¹⁶ village has one primary school, which consists of scattered and uncompleted shelters used as classrooms. The Rahad River is the main source of water. Other than that, the village has two water points with clean water. The health centre lacks basic medical tools as well as medicines needed to treat even common ailments. Just one medical assistant and two nurses work at the centre.

Regarding the effects of biophysical factors, my observations as well as interviews in the study area show that, recently, climate change has begun to affect in more negative impacts on small-scale farming. For example, the rainy season came very late in 2011, the year in which I was conducting my fieldwork. People I talked with emphasised that this has been the case for the past ten years.¹⁷ Likewise, they stated that in the past ten years patterns of rainfall changed considerably. Most rain now falls in a much shorter period of time. This has tremendously impacted farm productivity in the study area. This issue was emphasised by informants and environmental activists alike. In a workshop¹⁸ organised by the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society in south Gedaref state, almost all the experts agreed that the main problems affecting small-scale farming activities in the study area resulted from global climate change, global warming in particular. It is within this framework that one study concluded that 'Africa is already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change as seen in frequent floods and droughts and shift in marginal agricultural systems' (Ngaira 2007: 238).

Regarding the broader socio-economic context in Gedaref state, Miller (2005: 6) stated that 'the area can be labelled as both "central" and "peripheral" with the characteristics of both the "rich" and "poor"

¹⁶ According to the micro census I carried out in the village, the number of households in the village is 226.

¹⁷ Informal interview with a group of farmers from different villages of south Gedaref state, Doka locality, 2 June 2011.

¹⁸ This workshop was organised in Doka locality council on 2 June 2011. Its title was 'The environmental forum about the challenges of food insecurity as a result of climate change in south Gedaref state.'

regions of the Sudan.’ On the one hand, the mercantile class in Gedaref state – basically composed of the northern riverine ethnic groups – controls the grain trade and mechanised farming in the state; these people are the socially and economically dominant group (Assal 2005; Miller 2005). On the other hand, the western Sudanese and West Africans, who constitute the backbone of manual labour for small-scale farming in Gedaref state, have been described as the most marginalised and impoverished groups (Duffield 1983; Assal 2005). Developmental indicators (related to schooling, health, etc.) at the state level are high when compared to other states at the national level, however, there are significant internal inequalities between Gedaref town and different rural areas, southern Gedaref in particular (Miller 2005).

Conclusion

The lack of wage labourers constitutes the main problem for small farmers in the south of Gedaref state. The secession of South Sudan and the burgeoning of artisanal gold mining led to this decline of the agricultural labour force. The emergence of village-based associations is one of the main strategies adopted by small-scale farmers to get work done in spite of the lack of agricultural labourers. However, as the government intervenes in organising and assisting these associations, it may expect political loyalty in return for the indirect agricultural subsidies provided by the associations.

Farmers also face the increasing variability of rainfalls and the decrease of farm productivity, challenges generally ascribed to climate change. In addition, poverty, economic marginalisation and under-development characterise the situation of small-scale farmers in Gedaref state. In contrast, the mercantile class and large-scale farmers are socially and economically dominant in the area, with high inequality between these two groups. It appears that processes of class formation have begun to unfold and are replacing or intermingling with other forms of social stratification – along tribal lines in particular.

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Gifts, Guns and Govvermen: South Sudan and its Southeast

Immo Eulenberger

Africa appears in the Western media as little more than a playground of the four horsemen of the apocalypse: pestilence, war, famine, death.

– Hann and Hart 2011: 112

Eastern Equatoria State, in southeastern South Sudan, lies in a region experiencing chronic and recurring armed conflict [...], widespread cattle rustling, and general lawlessness [...] A key cause of this conflict is the geographical, social, and political marginalization of the agro-pastoralist communities [who] suffer from a lack of basic services, unreliable water supplies, poor leadership, depressed local economies, insufficient responses to drought, widespread poverty, and extremely poor health and education.

– McEvoy and Murray 2008: 12

More than 20 million pastoralists in the Horn of Africa occupy the bulk of its land, but are challenged as outdated, despite the sustainability of their livestock enterprises [...] Herders from the Red Sea to the Nile are regarded habitually as requiring the attentions of the state, and those seeking power in it.

– Knighton 2006: 269

South Sudan usually features in the media and scholarly literature as an extreme case of deficiency, misery, perpetual humanitarian crisis and state failure.¹ At independence, observers wrote articles titled

¹ Together with its neighbours Congo, Central African Republic, Chad and Ethiopia, Sudan has continuously been in the worst category of the Failed States Index (<http://ffp.statesindex.org>) since its inception in 2005; in 2014 it was renamed as the Fragile States Index, and South Sudan holds now the bottom rank, even before Somalia (www.foreignpolicy.com/fragile-states-2014). Sudan scholars like Tetzlaff (e.g., 1997) have elaborated on the phenomenon for decades,

'South Sudan: Failed State in Waiting' (Crilly 2011), 'How to Stop South Sudan Becoming a Failed State?' (Migiro 2011), 'Pre-Failed State' (Schott 2010) and 'Sudan Referendum: Birth of a Failed State?' (Martell and Blomfield 2011). Two years later, many friends of the young nation see their fears come true as the oil base of its wealth becomes an Achilles' heel in perilous confrontations with Khartoum, ethnicised conflicts grow into human disasters on both sides of the border, reports of mismanagement, corruption, illegal and brutal forms of intimidation, harassment and repressive or predatory violence did not recede but have increased alarmingly, conjuring up the nightmare of an emerging fragmented 'mafia system'.² Internationally noted mainly since the first post-independence trans-regional intra-south war broke out in December 2013,³ 'horrific atrocities have been committed by both parties to the conflict, with ethnically motivated attacks on civilians constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity' (AI 2014).

The common line of explanation for this apparent result of power struggles using violent ethnicity refers more or less explicitly to 'underdevelopment', widely exchangeable with the notion of 'backwardness' or a 'lagging behind' in the process of transformation towards a prosperous and stable Weberian state and matching society. Paradigmatically, an adviser to the Sudanese government (House 1989: 202) talked about 'the poor quality of the stock of human resources [in South Sudan]' – a wording that readers do not seem to find scandalous. 'Building the capacity' of the state, organisations and people is often presented as the recipe for improvement, and in practice this routinely translates into support of those individuals and structures that appear 'more modern'. Yet a closer look suggests that it is actually the very structures that have been supported under this

and there is a number of empirical studies working with the concept (e.g., Rottenburg 2008, Reno 2010). For discussions of the causes of 'state failure' see Bates 2008a, 2008b, Egnell and Haldén 2013, Herbst 1997, Rotberg 2004, Väyrynen 2000; for a critical view on the concept and its use see Diggins 2011, Easterly and Freschi 2010; for a range of complexities of 'failure' for Sudan see Streck and Braukämper 1990, Streck and Kramer 1991, Streck 1997, 2007.

² See AI 2014, AI and HRW 2014, Deng 2011, Funk 2010, HBF 2010, HSBA 2011, ICG 2011, Jok 2012, Laudati 2011, McEvoy and LeBrun 2010, Pinaud 2014, Rands and LeRiche 2012, Rolandsen and Breidlid 2012, 2013, Saferworld 2012, Schomerus and Allen 2010, U.S. Department of State 2013, 2014, plus countless related national and international news articles.

³ See e.g., AI 2014, Johnson 2014, Sørbo 2014.

doctrine that form a setting in which the ruthless and irresponsible behaviour that generates the misery of the country came to thrive as continuously rewarded and widespread model.

Perpetrators of destructive predation bank on their role as ‘the modern part’ of a national society that is routinely diagnosed as primarily suffering from a ‘weakness’ of modern institutions – while it is nearly totally ignored that there is an extremely rich landscape of internationally disregarded indigenous institutions that work remarkably well. Although highly perceptive of problems and supposedly underlying deficiencies, non-anthropologist observers seem very rarely to see – or at least address – this other side of the country’s reality. Laudati (2011: 22) on Jonglei state could exemplify this perspective: ‘Pervasive poverty, combined with continuing insecurity, lack of infrastructure, and limited market opportunities have combined to create a general landscape of deprivation, discrimination, and marginalisation.’ Neither my own observations in the Àteker⁴ region of the South Sudan-Ethiopia-Kenya-Uganda borderlands during three years of fieldwork between 2008 and 2014 (out of that nine months in Central and Eastern Equatoria, the region described by the quote above by McEvoy and Murray, especially Kapoeta East County) nor their combination with other evidence I am aware of can confirm the image of severe crisis for this part of the country or endorse the pessimism towards the capacities of ‘the people’.

Even though the eastern part of Eastern Equatoria State (henceforth EEE) is a border region known for heavy fighting during the last war (1983-2005)⁵ and a persistent culture of livestock raiding,⁶ it neither appears to be in crisis nor its people to be in trouble managing their own affairs. Its indigenous population, including the Topòsa, Jíye and Nyàngatom, belongs mostly to the Àteker cluster of the Eastern Nilotes, shares its language and

⁴ I use accents to indicate the pronunciation of not widely familiar terms, ‘ indicating accent on a short vowel like in Dìnka and ‘ on a long one like in Júba, although actual pronunciation, as for Àteker, is sometimes more complex than a single accent could represent properly.

⁵ See Johnson 2004, Simonse 2000.

⁶ See Barber 1968; Bevan 2007, 2008, Collins 1980, Eulenberger 2009, 2013, HSBA 2010, Kitonga 1984, Knighton 2003, Lamphear 1992, 1994, Leff 2009, Nyaba 2001, Pike et al. 2010, Schomerus 2008, Schomerus and Allen 2010, Simonse 2005, McEvoy and Murray 2008, Tornay 1993, 2009.

pastoralist culture.⁷ Pastoralists, who constitute the vast majority, maybe 95 per cent, of its population and widely follow a 'traditional' style of life, never intimated in our conversations that they felt poor or miserable or unhappy because of missing market opportunities or some kind of marginalisation. Proud of their remarkable livestock wealth, successfully in charge of their own defence, dispassionately appreciative of the gifts of development actors, and maintaining inner peace and social harmony,⁸ they did not seem to see themselves 'at the margins' of anything, even if in the context of South Sudan's territory they geographically are, but continue to be at the centre of their world, to say it in Turton's (2005) words.

My impression of the Topòsa, with a population of about 450,000 to 700,000, the largest ethnic community of EES, was that of a stable and self-confident society that is open to the use of new tools and opportunities, yet consonant with their indigenous culture and inherited social order, neither afraid of the future nor in a hurry to change. This suggests that the image of South Sudan as 'land in crisis' is not appropriate as characterisation of the reality of all parts of the country. While since independence long developing problems have again undeniably grown into human, humanitarian and social disaster, its markedly localised character offers keys to their understanding. The accounts of the country's ills are important to draw attention to real and severe situations producing massive human suffering for particular regions and spheres to the shocking degree the reports above suggest. Yet, their coexistence with areas where life goes on fairly undisturbed, and any talk of crisis would be utterly inappropriate, raises the question of what actually constitutes the difference between those parts whose desolate situation absorbs global attention, including that of social sciences and 'development practitioners', and other parts where things go comparably well.

The characteristics of rather 'stable' regions may give clues to the reasons for desolation in others. If we look at the evidence of actual

⁷ See e.g., Gulliver 1951, 1952, Gulliver and Gulliver 1953, Knighton 2005, Lamphear 1992, Müller 1989, Tornay 1981, 2001, Voßen 1982.

⁸ Àteker culture puts inner-tribal homicide quite successfully under a strict taboo. Members of the same ethnic community, or 'tribe' as English-speaking locals commonly say, never raid nor loot each other, and they do not enter into feuds with each other (see Gulliver 1951: 70, 125, 167-180, Dyson-Hudson 1966: 101, 200-201, 231-232, Kitonga 1984: 174).

misery, it seems to be concentrated in areas and populations where the influence of ‘modernity’ is stronger, especially Juba, among migrants and returnees, and areas with important resources and/or far above-average GoSS intervention, like in the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, and Lakes, where the worst and most extensive violence occurs. Why is that? Could it be possible that there are more problems with the patterns of ‘modernisation’ than with the societies that are supposed to be transformed by them? Could granting enough space for self-regulation to South Sudan’s culturally diverse population, together with reliable checks against predatory or predictably harmful intervention patterns, be more effective in the pursuit of social peace and a positively active attitude than concentrating efforts on the expansion of the state apparatus and ‘Western-style’ models of organisation (Jok 2011)?

To address these questions, this chapter takes a close look at some aspects of ‘modernity’ and ‘modernisation’, and how they relate to ‘traditional’ systems, in the context of South Sudan, and EEE in particular. It asks what ‘the state’ is and does here first and foremost, as well as what is really important for whom and why.

South Sudan’s Àteker Region – Notions of ‘Modern’ and ‘Traditional’

Irigàe ariàng akémoní. Ejí ariàng a ngakekiró.

The govermen roam their own wilderness and fight their own wars.

– Àteker pastoralist, Lotímor, Kapoeta East County, 14 April 2009

In this section, I will discuss the notions of ‘modernity’ and indigenous ‘tradition’ for the context of South Sudan’s Àteker, region both as coexisting principles and as contrasting social spheres.

Working with dualistic terminological elements invites a discussion of the problem of dichotomy. With ‘primitive’ and ‘civilised’ as a prominent case in point, it does not seem idle to defer to it, as we might grasp a notion central to the instrumental dualistic ideology of predatory systems. I will, however, maintain that for this specific case the dichotomy of modern/traditional is less misleading than other common notions, given that ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ spheres and

populations are conspicuously distinct in the research region, and formally educated 'elites', the main protagonists of the local version of modernity, form a kind of class.⁹

Academic scepticism towards the modern/traditional dichotomy is widely related to inappropriate attributions, many of which can be falsified as well by examining the Àteker case, as for instance those concerning individualism, mobility, openness to change and interest in products of modernity. In all these aspects Àteker pastoralists would rather fit clichés of 'modern man' than of 'traditionalism'. Nevertheless, structural change to the extent in which agents of modernisation envision it, lies clearly beyond the limits of their interest.

The coexistence of this disinterest with the faith of the 'modern community' in the superiority of their organisational model raises questions as to the role of power inequality and 'mimetic desire' in the profession of allegiance to different orders. In this, Àteker pastoralists appear very rational, but although ideology and everyday rationality fall widely apart in the modern sector, 'modern people' are not as irrational as it might seem. 'Irrationality' is rather produced by 'the system'. It points to the indigenous-exogenous dichotomy concerning the origin of the coexisting basic orders and spheres, both in regard to the origin of their underlying ideas and the origin of the resources that form their respective material base, which is primarily local for the indigenous order and primarily external for the modern sphere.

There appears to be more synergy between individual and collective interests in traditional Àteker society as compared to the modern sector of South Sudan. In the latter, higher structural inequality leads to more injustice and 'dysfunctional' features. Although it offers more diverse – at least hypothetical – livelihood options, it is much less reliable and very biased in their delivery. And again, pastoralists are for the most part anyway not even interested in them.

The prevalent decision of Àteker pastoralists against a 'change of livelihood' is rational not least because livelihood security is much higher in their own system. My own empirical research indicates that, e.g., the Eastern Topòsa, who usually are lumped together with the protagonists of the misery scenario, are actually intriguingly rich.

⁹ On recent class formation processes in South Sudan see especially Pinaud 2014.

However, increasing livelihood precariousness is typical for pastoralists exposed to strong impacts of modernisation. It thus appears that modernisation is more easily beneficial for victims of modernisation than for those yet relatively unaffected by it. This is, however, clouded by an ideology of change to 'superior' forms of organisation that dominates the sphere of modernity.

After reminding of how modernisation was introduced to South Sudan by force – by aliens who served their own interests –, and how it has produced rather than reduced crisis, I will use the second part of the chapter to address the interrelation of imperial interests, the rentier state model that prevails in South Sudan and the crucial autonomy of societies like the one I came to study.

Tradition and modernity have often been referred to as antagonistic, and this notion was increasingly criticised as flawed and misleading in social sciences. I will explain why I maintain this heuristic dichotomy as a descriptive tool but refute some of the notions associated with these terms in certain discursive traditions - even if mitigated and veiled by policies of 'politically correct' phraseology- in relation to the issues, people and places under discussion.

At the core of the problem are discourses, rooted in self-serving dichotomies of primitive, savage and ignorant versus civilised, progressive and enlightened, reaching all the way back through hegemonic, imperialist and colonial endeavours to the prominent Ancient Greek concept of barbarians and the ethnocentric chauvinism frequent in tribal societies which the self-proclaimed 'enlightened' like to contrast with their own universalistic pretensions. This hierarchising construction is evident in remarks of northern Sudanese about 'blacks' or *abīd*, of Egyptians regarding Sudanese, of Ethiopian 'Highlanders' concerning the dark *shankila* of the peripheries, of the missionaries and deacons of modernity in relation to their target groups, and of 'educated elites' about their 'illiterate' flocks.

Regardless if a 'superior race', 'superior religion', 'superior culture' or 'superior order' is assumed, portraying oneself as superior is much easier when the inferiority of the other is highlighted by flaws and deficiencies. The attitude can be borne by wings of pity and commiseration or by incomprehension and contempt; what remains clear is that one's own model is the better one.

Much of the social science critique of the past decades was directed against dichotomous perspectives as such, and of dichotomies in scientific representation in particular. An obvious argument is that things are too complex to fit into dualistic schemes. And that is obviously true. For a specific endeavour of description, however, it can, in my view, still be justified to use dichotomies to point out and explain structures of crucial importance. That does not mean to declare that 'state' and 'society' or 'humanity' and 'nature' or 'modern' and 'traditional' elements of society are 'really' separate entities in the same way that distant planets or islands are. Of course they are not. They are analytical distinctions, abstract categories, and are as rough, ambiguous and approximate as categories at that level of abstraction will inevitably be.

There are myriads of ties or zones of merger or overlap. Yet in this text, my aim is not primarily the appraisal of merging zones, although that would certainly be a valuable endeavour too, nor the meticulous detection of elements of change in pastoralist life or of indigenous elements merged into reasoning and practices of 'modern people', although that would certainly be interesting. The aim here is to understand what main structures of order and regulation, structures of decisive importance for the present state of affairs and the course of events, emerge from the complex reality of the area under study. In that, this text is thus constructivist, not deconstructivist, except in relation to certain notions that I feel are common but unacceptably misleading. And it seems to me that many notions are far more misleading here than the modern/traditional dichotomy as such.

In my three years of work and research among the pastoralist communities of the region, I was struck by a differentiation of social spheres that outside the realm of anaphylactic deconstructivist reactions would probably spontaneously be referred to in terms of 'traditional' and 'modern(ised)'. The pastoralist majority of my research area –which is meant when in the following the 'traditional sphere' is mentioned– lives the semi-nomadic life that is typical for many stateless northeast African herding societies, is economically widely self-sufficient and follows patterns of organisation and behaviour that are 'indigenous' in that they predate, as social systems, the orders introduced by the colonial and postcolonial state and other modern organisations by far.

The pastoralists' everyday affairs are regulated by institutions like extended families,¹⁰ age sets, clans, territorial sections, herding communities, diviners, etc., all with their specific approximate norms of interaction.¹¹ Nearly all South Sudanese Àteker pastoralists are illiterate, adhere to indigenous 'pagan' ideas and rituals, and run their affairs with extremely little interference from 'modern' institutions. Most of those institutions (except for chiefs and 'auxiliary policemen') are here the domain of a tiny but important minority of 'modern' people, usually referred to as 'learned' or 'educated' by the region's English speakers and as *ariàng* in local language. This term refers to anyone belonging to 'the modern sphere', anyone who is more at home there than in the pastoralist world, regardless of whether he belongs to the same ethnic community or to one from another part of the country or even a different continent.

The 'indigenous *ariàng*', i.e., those socialised into the modern sphere, most often through school education or time in 'modern' (para-)military outfits, have come to form a separate class, not only because of enculturation but also because they form a separate social system with its own rules and relations that is markedly different from the traditional one. And in sharp contrast to the traditional system, it depends for its functioning on a permanent flow of external resources and labour.

One of the problems with contrasting 'traditional' and 'modern' (societies or) parts of society is that this contrast has been influentially stylised in ways that do no justice to much of the anthropological evidence. There is, for example, the cliché that among the main differences there is 'individualism' on the modern side, associated with 'free will and choice', 'mobility' and 'progress' (see Bronner 2008: 420). However, the daily-life behaviour and 'political attitude' of Àteker pastoralists struck me as intriguingly 'individualist', not least in comparison to what I know of a number of modern societies.

While people in complex state-centred societies accept a large number of specialised authorities who direct their actions in many

¹⁰ Gulliver (1966: 52) calls the Àteker family aptly a 'self-determinant pastoral unit, moving more or less independently of like units', underlining its extreme autonomy in all kinds of decisions.

¹¹ For insights into the social and political order of Àteker pastoralist societies see Dyson-Hudson 1966, Gulliver 1951, 1952, 1966, Gulliver and Gulliver 1953, Knighton 2005, Müller 1989, Tornay 1981, 2001.

affairs and allow people only narrow margins to make decisions, an adult, married Àteker herdsman has a vast range of free choices to make and few authorities to respect. While most existential and frequent decisions, like where to move with the livestock or whether or not to join a raiding party, are his alone, there are some instances where the well-being of others is closely involved that require collective decision making and give him a voice but will in the end leave him with three options: go with the majority, walk away and follow a contrasting decision, or act against the group's will and expect to suffer the consequences.¹² Although that obviously, especially in conflict mediation, means he 'can't always get what he wants', it still leaves him with a range of personal freedom that contrasts, e.g., with the conditions of highly regulated industrial societies.

As regards the next assumption, about mobility as a feature contrasting modern societies to others, Àteker society shows, of course, very high levels of mobility in as far as they are necessary to use the environment efficiently and respond to threats.¹³ Migrations are frequent and often take pastoralists hundreds of kilometres away, occasionally into areas that are in one sense or another 'territory of other ethnic communities and can expose life and property to permanent threats of attack, even if less so in times of contractual intercommunity peace. Apart from that, many pastoralists have friends among other, sometimes even clearly rival communities, visit

¹² See Dyson-Hudson 1966: 55, 63, 71, 108, 169-186, 207, Gulliver 1951: 117, 122, 166, *passim*. There is one among the traditional institutions that leaves little direct influence to an 'average' individual: the advice of powerful diviners. Diviners or seers basically act – in a sequence of decreasing frequency – (a) as healers, (b) as authorities in conflict matters, and (c) ritually fighting threats of disaster. There is generally freedom to follow their instructions, but the blame for negative consequences of the failure to heed them will easily fall on those who do not – much as in the case of modern physicians. As long as this concerns only the same (e.g. sick) person, the reaction will not normally exceed reproach. In the case of warfare, this is different, as people will blame losses inevitably on the offender, and those losses can be extremely painful. Yet, punishment hardly ever gets physical, which could be interpreted as another sign of the independence of individual decisions and the freedom of choice of 'free men' (although this is not an emic term, probably because Ateker culture lacks the contrast notion of 'unfree men', as there are no slaves or servants or 'lower' castes or clans or the like here).

¹³ See Abbink 2009, Anderson and Broch-Due 1999, Dyson-Hudson 1966, Eaton 2008, Eulenberger 2009, Fratkin and McCabe 1999, Fratkin and Roth 2005, Galaty 2013, Gulliver 1951, 1952, Johnson 2009: 176-177, *passim*, Lamphear 1992, 1994, Pike et al. 2010, Sagawa 2010, Tornay 1981, 1993, 2001, Turton 1999, 2002, 2005.

them and maintain gift-exchange relations.¹⁴ Today Àteker pastoralists also visit proto-urban and urban zones in- and outside their 'traditional territory.' Sometimes they sell an animal to purchase a sheet, sugar or other luxury goods, or bullets, a commodity necessary to keep their economic base protected. Sometimes someone needs treatment that requires remuneration (although a number of dispensaries render certain services for free). In contrast to their educated class they do, however, very rarely shift their residence with permanence or for longer periods to areas beyond the territorial limits of their pastoralist economy.

To be clear, Àteker pastoralists are far from being 'untouched' by the modern world. They have coexisted and interacted with it for more than a century,¹⁵ and to an increasing degree. Cultural change in pre-colonial times too could be swift, even in the absence of any modernisation program.¹⁶ A well-researched example are age-set systems.¹⁷ Yet the difference between forms of organisation is still decisively larger between 'indigenous' societies like those of Àteker pastoralists on one side and the highly complex orders of specialisation and hierarchy in the global society of modernity, including in South Sudan, on the other. In this, the notion of 'modern' is defined as tied to international perceptions of established 'best practices', far beyond the ritual explicitness of development talk. These perceptions provide substantial orientation for societies with all kinds of socio-cultural 'mixture'. And although Àteker pastoralists are generally open to the adoption of new 'cultural elements', like shorts, sunglasses and decorative wristwatches, or useful tools like assault rifles, modern medicine and money, they have, as far as I can see or is reported, never really considered changing their 'traditional' way of organisation and production.¹⁸ Such ideas are, however, frequently brought up by 'modern people', both indigenous and non-indigenous,

¹⁴ See Girke 2010, Sagawa 2010, Sobania 1991, Tadesse 2000, 2006.

¹⁵ See especially the accounts in Barber 1968, Collins 1980, Dyson-Hudson 1966, Kitonga 1984, Knighton 2005, Lamphear 1992, 1994, Simonse 2000, Tornay 1993, 2009.

¹⁶ See Bollig 1992; Knighton 2005: 35, Lamphear 1992, 1994.

¹⁷ See Baxter and Almagor 1978, Kurimoto 1998, Müller 1989, Simonse 1992.

¹⁸ While I see Dyson-Hudson 1966, Gulliver 1951, Kitonga 1984, Tornay 1993, 2001, 2009 in agreement, the most vigorous claim on this point has probably been made by Knighton (2003, 2005, 2006).

who have been socialised into a view of socio-cultural difference that projects superior-inferior evaluation scales onto forms of organisation. This self-righteous partisan projection partly explains the importance of a degree of similarity (at least in appearance) with models associated with the centres of global admiration and jealousy, i.e., 'the rich and powerful'.

Modernity, in this sense, frequently includes a dimension of mimetic desire, as René Girard called it. Most people would supposedly prefer power to powerlessness, and there is ample evidence for a tendency to imitate those considered successful¹⁹, even if the imitated details lack practical relevance. Among the reasons are the desire for some of the symbolical power of a model of origin; elements of 'magical thinking' similar to those involved in prayer rituals and beliefs in powers of scripture; as well as faith in conceptual, i.e. ideological numina like 'the market', 'development' and 'modernisation'. And one of the most prominent reasons to believe in something is apparently that many others we know do so as well.

This does not mean that 'modern people' reason always less rationally than the observably 'mercilessly sober' Àteker pastoralists. Most indigenous and non-indigenous *ariàng* I met appeared to be perfectly rational in regard to behaviour of immediate impact on their daily life and basic interests, accepting that their strategies would nevertheless not always be seen as conducive, fair or 'proper' by others, including myself.

As for much of the teachings of 'World Religions', many of the formal assumptions about what is 'best practice' according to the informal and multi-voiced canon of modernity have little impact on everyday behaviour. Christians routinely disregard their fellow humans, Muslims fail to comply with one or the other rule, ultra-nationalists eat 'foreign foods', and those believing, more or less explicitly, in the superiority of 'modern' order over others engage in nonstandard practices like corruption, deceit, benefit-reducing work-avoidance and aggressive predation. Àteker pastoralists sometimes fail to pay enough attention and animals get lost, or they may transgress rules against adultery, etc. That is to say that different types of societies have in common that individuals routinely follow certain

¹⁹ See e.g., Nelson and Winter 1982, Schlag 1998, Shea 2009.

patterns of behaviour which a majority considers as suboptimal. Yet, for Àteker pastoralists the discrepancy between normative ideologies and actual practice seems to be less fundamental than in the modern sector around them. Basic norms like respect for senior age or the rights of fellow tribesmen are occasionally violated, but not as systematically and notoriously as, e.g., the priority of the common good or formal regulation in the modern sector.

It might be interesting to inquire in how far that is related to a fundamental difference between the two spheres, namely that the basic patterns of social organisation in the pastoralist sphere have developed over centuries continuously into an 'indigenous culture' (including collective models of interpretation, organisation and regulation) balancing individual and collective interests, whereas in the *ariàng* sector recently 'imported' or 'travelling'²⁰ non-indigenous models were established as mutating but increasingly powerful patterns by an originally alien but gradually expanding class aiming at privileged hierarchical control of resource extraction and redistribution.

A closely related essential difference shaping the modes of practice in the two spheres is that the 'traditional' system is based on the sustained exploitation of resources that are 'local' in the sense of 'directly accessed in the region of residence' whereas the modern part of society is overwhelmingly geared towards accessing non-regional resources through structures linking the region with the wider world.

Local production –as different from 'national production', e.g., of mineral exports through usually foreign labour in 'extractive enclaves' (Ferguson 2005) – is largely not among the practises from which the modern sector derives income. Specific forms of interaction with foreign organisations, be they companies, states or NGOs, proved to be sources of incomparably larger revenues, and much easier to exploit. Reformist struggles for market shares for local products are so demanding and yet so prone to failure that the elite preference for 'the easy way' can be regarded rational from an individual point of view, even if not from a long-term 'national economy' perspective.

Therefore, while it is easy to find synergy between individual and collective (i.e., communal) interests in traditional Àteker society, even

²⁰ See Behrends, Park and Rottenburg 2014, Czarniawska and Sevón 2005, Reyna 2007, Rottenburg 1996, 2009.

in such problematic institutions as livestock raiding, the same seems to be substantially more difficult in the modern sphere. There are, for example, strategies that are so prominent in the perennial factional struggles for privileged access to sources of 'modern revenue' that they could be seen as 'unofficial standard' here, like tribalist and nepotistic clientelism, corruption and illicit coercion, yet it is hard to see how they could possibly provide advantages for the concerned (national) collective. They lead to mobilisations of force whose costs outweigh their benefits for the proclaimed collective, while a situation of loss for that collective often corresponds to a situation of gain for structurally privileged individuals or groups (factions).

Both types of society produce situations of theoretically avoidable loss. Yet, a type that is egalitarian in the way Àteker society is does not allow for permanent structures of advantage other than advantage of ability among equals, divided primarily by gender, age and ethnicity. In the modern sphere, the costs and benefits of social practice are distributed much more unequally, namely through structures of hierarchical entitlement. This results in progressive inequality among social groups, due to structural differences in access to sources of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. While proponents of 'modernisation' and 'development' commonly refer to equality of opportunity as legitimating value, the process they promote seems to bring about exactly the opposite here.

Among followers of more classical modernisation theories, Marxists will easily detect processes of class formation and growing contradictions here, while adherents of more unambiguously affirmatory understandings might emphasise a multiplication of opportunities as a somehow complementary effect. This expectation is certainly justified in regard to the sheer number of options that present themselves – at least theoretically – for a member of the modern economy, as compared to the 'monotony' of 'professional choice' in pastoralist society. However, the decisive questions remain how reliable these choices actually are and how important the possibility of choice for individuals in each society really is.

Where the effects of the aid industry have not led to population growth that makes it impossible to accommodate everyone within the pastoralist sector – as is the case, e.g., among the neighbouring Turkána people – practically everyone can become a herdsman (or the

female pendant of that) and has a chance to build up wealth, social and symbolic capital through careful herding, raiding and social behaviour, especially exchange. In the modern world, however, many choices provide drastically substandard income and prestige, and / or are often much less 'really available', especially when 'elite' strata have established forms of hegemony over them and drawn them into a system with clientelist and nepotist traits.

In view of these facts we can say that the decision of pastoralists like the Topòsa, Jíye and Nyàngatom majority not to 'change system' is understandable even in terms of economically motivated rational choice. Although a pastoral life entails considerable risks, 'livelihood security' in general seems much higher in a functioning pastoralist economy than under the precarious conditions of much of Africa's 'modern sector', as exemplified most markedly by vast urban and aid-dependent populations.

My inquiries into notions of wealth and poverty contributed substantially to this conclusion. Among the Topòsa of the Nanyangachór region, numbering several thousand households, where I did the most comprehensive study, I found only one person that was considered 'really poor'. This was attributed to his missing ability to restrain himself from 'eating away' his own stock. (A herdsman who cannot resist his appetite will never be able to build up a sizeable herd, even if he is otherwise as skilled as anyone else.) My calculations computed the wealth of an average, middle-aged (male) herd owner at 120 bulls, 80 milking cows, 55 heifers, 250 sheep and goats, and three donkeys, not counting calves, kids, etc. Prices of 800 Sudanese pounds (400 Euros or EUR) per bull, 1000 EUR per milking cow in Kapoéta),²¹ 300 EUR per heifer, 50 per ram and 100 per he-goat (donkeys are not usually sold and therefore not counted) equalled about 108,000 EUR. 'Rich' herd owners (*ngikabaràk*, sing. *ekabaràn*) were said to own often about four or five times that amount of stock.²² Even households at the 'normal' lower levels were assumed to be able to fend for their basic needs and, with dedication and good luck, grow their herd to an average or beyond-average size.

²¹ Schomerus 2008: 51 reports the same figure for nearby Íkotos county (EES).

²² Interviews in Kapoeta East county, April, July and August 2009.

It is clear that this is not the case in all pastoralist societies, especially those drawn more extensively into modern structures and consequently growing numerically beyond economic carrying capacity, or where structural change is externally enforced and/or indigenous societies lose resources to more powerful players emerging on the local scene. These societies may easily reach limits of sustainability and see themselves 'forced' by circumstances to try alternative strategies.²³

My material does not allow for generalised claims, but it indicates that it might be worth considering that some non-modern systems function well enough not to be regarded as deficient 'second best options' for their particular contexts.

Certain modernisation schemes of improvement might, on the other hand, be truly beneficial, for example in the case of so many urban poor or landless peasants that do not manage to live a 'dignified' life due to the absence of sufficiently reliable livelihoods and of social power that could grant them a degree of 'equality' and protect them against disenfranchisement, harassment and predation. These schemes should lead to restoration of individual and social 'sovereignty', ideally to levels close to those of pastoralist Àteker society, but they have all too often resulted in obvious deterioration in these respects when forced on relatively self-sufficient societies.

Since the coming of the colonial regime, change has been at the top of the agenda of the multi-national community of *ariàng*. Modernity came into South Sudan in the form of groups of people believing in the superiority of an order predominant in other parts, i.e., their part, of the world. Apart from explicitly religious claims to superiority on a 'moral' level, they felt justified in this belief not least by their ability to defeat those following differing models of organisation. Just like self-proclaimed inter- and intra-national agents of modernisation today feel about those whom they are to 'develop', some of them held that submitting 'savages' and 'barbarians' was to bring them a better order, one that would 'elevate' them to play a part in a more 'proper' form of life.

The people they found did not share this view. Yet they gave in, sooner or later, and sometimes only temporarily, to a superior

²³ See Anderson and Broch-Due 1999, Fratkin and McCabe 1999, Fratkin and Roth 2005, Galaty 2013.

capacity of coercion. While the 19th century wave of raider-traders cared little about the development of structures that would do more than simply 'open' the area for predatory resource extraction (then mainly ivory and slaves), agents of the Western idea of 'civilisation', starting with the Jewish German Eduard Schnitzer who first ruled a part of South Sudan as Ottoman Governor Emin Pasha, tried to establish structures meant to bring it closer to 'modern' standards of organisation.

The regions most exposed to this kind of modernisation have been the ones developing the most obvious signs of crisis. This is undeniable for the main 'hunting grounds' of the slavers in Bahr al-Ghazal and western Equatoria. As hosts of central trading and government posts, also the Bari of the 'Mountain Nile' suffered terribly. Within a few years, their legendary cattle wealth melted away while fighting and power struggles became permanent, leading to a situation that can be characterised as 'crisis' beyond doubt.²⁴ The struggle between Muslim 'trading' entrepreneurs with their commercial militarism and the 'administrative militarism' of the British, beyond the Mahdiya period, introduced 'intra-modern' wars to the region that was to become South Sudan. These wars between outsiders sided by locals were again concentrated in the zones of most intensive involvement and transformation of local societies by the competing systems of subjugating integration.²⁵

The Anglo-Egyptian restoration at the end of the nineteenth century saw frontiers of forceful integration moving across the cultural landscape as waves of rifle, machine gun and artillery fire. And with the dawn of independence, Equatoria, the region most transformed during the Pax Britannica, became the main battlefield of the first civil war (1955-72), bringing forth much of the first generations of 'transformed' southerners, i.e., those that had been trained in modern military techniques and organisation and those formally educated in schools. The increased integration of the other two regions, Upper Nile and Bahr al Ghazal, into both the military and

²⁴ The best synopsis of this case so far can be found in Simonse (1992: 80-109).

²⁵ Parts of the Àteker region shared this fate temporarily when they became a frontier between British and Ethiopian colonialism; see esp. Barber 1968, Collins 1980, Lamphear 1992, Tornay 2001.

civil systems was reflected by their increased involvement in the second war (1983-2005) and the wider distribution of the violent fronts of change. Yet their highest concentrations could still be found around hotspots of modernisation: towns, oilfields and transport corridors.

The configurations of the second war and the geography of modernisation continue shaping lines of conflict and crisis. Yet, there are more general features of the situation in South Sudan that have to be mentioned if the analysis is to be satisfactory.

Empire, Rentier State and Autonomous Societies

'Govverman likes developpman. Developpman comes money.'

– Topòsa with basic school education, Kapoéta, EES, May 23 2009

The state-society dichotomy is rooted in the paradox that a state – according to the 'modern' understanding in the tradition of the French Revolution – should represent and serve all its citizens, while it is simultaneously a distinct organisational body and certain groups of people have privileged access to it. Thus, when I talk about 'the state' here, I mean that specific body borne by certain groups of people who, as its professionals, permanently reproduce it, yet do so 'in reality' often rather in accordance with their own particular interests and those of important patrons and clients than in the public interest of 'all'.

In this view, states are normally led by some form of political elite that has more power over its institutional apparatus and the actions of its employees than the rest of the population. To maintain and control this apparatus, a state, or its elite, needs income. Only with the redistribution of resources from its pool can 'a state' establish and reproduce itself as a 'social machine' that structures resource flows and modes of interactions. The way the state and its elite obtain this income determines their relation with the rest of the society.

Among the central questions of this text is if the situation in Topòth (Topòsaland) is comparatively 'good' not *although* but *because* there is little state around and because the national and regional governments

are meddling very little into Topòsa affairs, and why that might be the case.

South Sudan was born as an extreme case of a rentier state, i.e. one that relies overwhelmingly on 'rents' (including royalties, taxes and kickbacks) for the export of raw materials, especially minerals,²⁶ as well as 'rents' for its misery, crisis and self-destruction with which it continually reproduces itself as emergency client of the aid industry. Research suggests that rentier orders in Africa often lead to severe disintegration and increasingly violent contests between factions of certain political classes trying to capture key positions which enable them to guide the flow of revenue to their own benefit. The alliance between Nimeiri and 'the modern south', i.e., its educated elites and the southerners in the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), broke up over Nimeiri's attempt to keep the prospected oil wealth to the central government, i.e., his inner circle.²⁷ This was a main root of the civil war that eventually led to the creation of South Sudan as a new country.

The state in South Sudan relied since its colonial inception on external rent – and EEE is an extreme case of that pattern. It is its driest region. Endless plains of thorn bush are interspersed with hills and ridges carved by rivers flowing for only a few days in a year. Due to the unreliable and often scarce rainfall, its ethnic groups, although good years see them harvesting a significant amount of sorghum, live even more on their numerous herds of goats, sheep and cattle than the more widely known Dinka and Nuer who rely very much on farming and fishing. Only the Turkána to the southwest are even 'more pastoralist and nomadic', as their environment blends into a true desert.

'Development' is usually brought first where conditions seem favourable to the ends of the developers. Commonly these ends relate to resource extraction in one form or another, and 'to increase the productivity' of an area means to get more of its resources drawn into

²⁶ For early thoughts on the rentier state model see Beblawi and Luciani 1987; in reference to the African context Yates 1996; for a recent reflection on the South Sudan case Omeje 2010; all those refer specifically to the effects of oil wealth.

²⁷ For a parallel case of rent prospects contributing to escalating conflict, as well as of relations between oil wealth and conflict, see Behrends, Reyna and Schlee 2011.

one's own system of circulation. But in this thorny corner of four countries' peripheries, at maximum distance from the respective centres of resource drain,²⁸ proponents of development were attracted neither by treasured commodities,²⁹ nor by fertile soil waiting for planter and plough.³⁰

The successive governments of the Sudan – in their local manifestations neatly referred to as *govverman* in local English as if to somebody in the more personal sense of the term ('The *govverman* says...', 'The *govverman* will come and...') – did not have much interest in this harsh region.

The real value of the area for the British was geostrategic. It provided them with a buffer zone between their actual zone of interest – the Nile valley, the Great Lakes and the fertile highlands – and rival expansionist powers.³¹ The region was peripheral enough and its tribes sufficiently strong to maintain this situation for a long time. It was drawn into the arena of serious competition only in the 1980s when its character as border zone with Kenya and Ethiopia became a crucial asset for *anyànya* (here the local term for the SPLM/A and other 'rebel groups') logistics, a 'must-have area'. Today its role as one of two main supply corridors and the only viable alternative route to export South Sudan's oil, has even increased its geostrategic importance, especially when one considers that oil constitutes 98 per cent of South Sudan's sources of revenue.

Another important token of peace and stability for the ethnic communities of EEE is that they have remained distant from the power struggles at the centre. After a lethal period of mutually painful adaptation to the realities of power and convenience, the Topòsa and their neighbours again became pleasantly 'easy' partners for the GoSS, very much as they had been for the colonial regime and Khartoum most of the time. Already the regional branch of the imperial British enterprise knew it was lucky to deal with a people as sober and

²⁸ I.e., the meeting point of the two Niles, the Ethiopian highlands, the Kenyan highlands, and Buganda.

²⁹ Except for ivory (poached away in the decades around the fin de siècle by Abyssinians and Swahili), which led to the introduction of firearms and luxury goods like industrial beads, decorative wires and clothes but practically nowhere to any 'sustainable development'.

³⁰ Collins (1980: passim), adopting the 'colonial point of view', repeatedly calls it a 'wasteland'.

³¹ See Barber 1968, Collins 1980.

pragmatic as the Topòsa. Used to neighbours who would take as many animals and lives as possible when given the chance, the behaviour of the khaki-clad invaders flying the Union Jack whose weapons apparently enabled them to annihilate scores of the feared and famous Àteker spearmen within minutes must have puzzled the *warrior herdsman* (Marshall-Thomas). As old pastoralists remember, they felt that for the few things the curious strangers introduced – a small market settlement (Kapoéta), the position of ‘chiefs’ as mediators, plus some small ‘regular mandatory gifts’, i.e. a tax so low it didn’t hurt anybody³² – there was no point in sending more sons and brothers into obliteration by sturdy rifle and machine gunfire ‘just to save a goat per year’. Goats were lost in hundreds and thousands to drought, disease and enemy raids, so the colonial taxes were mere ‘peanuts’ to such renowned wealthy herders as the Topòsa. ‘They also have to eat’ was the rather sympathetic attitude towards the poor cloth wearers, as those strange fellows had no animals of their own, the worst possible form of poverty.

The colonial state and the self-sufficient ‘tribe’ reached a mutually satisfying *modus vivendi* with intriguing ease. The Topòsa decided to ‘render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s’, i.e., some old goats and a tiny bit of their vast lands to build a couple of houses, houses so hot no reasonable person would voluntarily choose to suffer in them, and yes, some acceptance of verdicts passed on offenders of the Pax Britannica. Otherwise the two parties struck a mode of mutual *laissez faire*, as major interests of both sides were not touched. The exception was the very reason for the *govvermen* to eventually enter the area and establish, even if only minimally, their system of control: attacks on people under their effective administration, even if provoked, had to be seen as challenges to British authority in general, with potentially very expensive consequences if interpreted as signs of weakness by other (mostly just recently subdued) subjects.³³ Similarly, tribal societies had to maintain the power of deterrence

³² My informants recalled a rate of 15 SDG in their areas of origin in the ‘old homelands’ [along the Lokalyán and Thingaita] before the war (that brought tax collection to an end) and their eastward migration in the 1980s.

³³ However, fighting beyond the administrative arena, e.g. in the ungoverned eastern pastures, could easily ‘pass below the radar’.

ensured by their destructive capacities and could therefore not afford to leave enemy strikes unanswered.³⁴

The principle of reciprocity that underlies such patterns of mandatory retaliation and punishment (receiving a strike obliges to return it, as a 'negative gift' so to speak) is also the basis of the exchange of concessions, supporting actions and commodities ('positive gifts'). Social science attention to this 'positive' side has prominently focused on material gifts and 'favours', less on concessions, i.e. the (more or less explicit) agreements between individuals and groups that structure their relationships. I call them 'concessions' to highlight the obligations they entail in terms of cooperation and positive reciprocity and in restraining aggressive, predatory behaviour.

The relationship of the Topòsa with their colonisers was very much based on mutual restraint. The British knew these people acquiesced to their rule because it was hardly felt. After independence, their Arabic-speaking successors continued this policy of minimum interference for a long time. It saved resources from being wasted where little could be won and much lost. When the Khartoum government tried to change the 'minimum policy' by starting an Islamisation programme, it lost indeed.³⁵

It appears that mutual non-interference continues to be a central concessional base of the relations between the traditional and the modern world in most parts of life in EEE. Obviously and inevitably there is plenty of interaction, but the economic and political circuits remain remarkably segregated. Chiefs provide an organisational link between the spheres and 'security' issues can trigger 'government' intervention in specific cases,³⁶ but neither do government institutions

³⁴ This utilitarian approach to conflict analysis is, especially for the northeast African context, laid out (and combined with a complementary analysis of cultural and historical factors shaping conflict behaviour) in Schlee 2002, 2008; the imperial need for deterrence is splendidly structurally analysed in Popitz 1986; on the need to deter and retaliate for tribal societies of the region see Bollig 1992, Eaton 2008, and Lamphear 1994; for a generalised discussion see Turner and Schlee 2008.

³⁵ This was repeatedly described as a key reason for the 'defection' of Fr. George Kinga Longókwa, by that time the unchallenged 'leader of the Topòsa in the modern arena', to the SPLM/A, just after he had received a tremendous amount of assault rifles that converted 'his tribe' into a serious match for any army (see Simonse 2000: 40-41). Yet this manoeuvre might well have been premeditated by this renownedly crafty politician.

³⁶ In Eulenberg 2009 I describe a case where an important 'tribal peace'

normally meddle into daily-life affairs outside the three small towns, nor do pastoralists intervene in *govvermen's* business.

Many of the patterns of non-interference are possible in South Sudan because the state does not need to expropriate surplus from the rural communities, as it relies entirely on (a) the extraction of mineral resources for its revenue and (b) the aid industry – for which it does not have to do anything but provide a legal framework and rudimentary services to the producers (specialised international organisations), a degree of protection, and a certain amount of bureaucracy to administer the profit.

This gives the new state a unique (and in historical comparison puzzling) chance of harmony with its subjects, as it can exempt them from taxes and exploitation, while still providing – even if merely through mediation of external aid efforts – benefits and services. The Topòsa area is a part of the country where this pattern indeed works, not least because the central government and the top players of the Topòsa elite, a geostrategically important ally, seem indeed committed to keep each other happy and refrain from raining on each other's parade,³⁷ and because the SPLM/A and local population give sufficient space to one another.

During the civil war, this was much easier when the SPLM/A was well enough supplied so as not to rely or prey on the local population – as it did often quite nastily in other cases.³⁸ Ann Laudati (2011) and others see large parts of the SPLM/A, which also included and includes large contingents of former opponents, continuing to act like

securing the eastern grazing margins of Topòsa and Nyàngatom was almost destroyed by four 'western' miscreants who treacherously assaulted three Súri they had befriended, killed two and made away with the animals the 'visitors' had brought for (barter) sale. With the weight of the (Nyàngatom) Deputy Governor on it, the state-society machinery suddenly became remarkably effective. Three of the culprits were tracked down quickly, not least thanks to the eager cooperation of the local Topòsa who wanted to keep the peace for the sake of grazing, and returned the animals; the fourth had disappeared into the urban jungle with his loot and his part was produced by elders of his section. Finally found, he was reportedly executed as deterring example. That peace remained stable for quite some time.

³⁷ In my article in Vaughan, Schomerus and de Vries (2013) I describe and analyse a temporary crisis where this concord was seriously tested.

³⁸ Two extremely instructive case studies for a positive and a negative example, respectively, are Kurimoto 1994 and Walraet 2008; for overviews see Rone, Prendergast and Sorensen 1994 (South Sudan), and Simonse 2000 (East-bank Equatoria).

occupants and oppressors in their own country, the one they claimed to have liberated. Although sometimes less outspoken, this view is widely shared by South Sudanese and foreign observers alike. The 'tribal mode' of perception and ethical differentiation that does not complicate the treatment of 'others' (in Àteker language *ngimoi*, meaning both 'strangers' and 'enemies') with too many scruples merged with a 'corporate tribalism' which applies patterns similar to those of 'tribal conflict' to the interaction between members of one's own organisation (SPLA, EDF, SSDF, etc.) and others – not least local communities and their fighting groups, often called 'militias', even where the definition does not fit. The attitude of armed men, regardless of rank and pro- or anti-'government' allegiance, remains tragically saturated with perceptions of a 'legitimacy' of deliberate and random humiliation, looting, mistreatment, killing, rape, etc.

Nearly a year before the outbreak of the present full-fledged intra-south war, the U.S. Department of State (2013: 3-8) South Sudan 2012 Human Rights Report ascertained:

The transitional constitution prohibits such practices; however, government security forces tortured, beat, and harassed political opponents, journalists, and human rights workers [...] continued to arrest and detain individuals arbitrarily [...] tortured and raped women [...] soldiers accused of abuse were often detained briefly but then released [...] Beatings, detention, and harassment of foreign or foreign-looking citizens were common. [...] The SPLA does not have law enforcement authority, unless acting at the request of civil authorities. Nevertheless, the SPLA regularly detained persons, including in SPLA-run detention facilities to which monitors had no access. [...] the SPLA's approach to internal security and civilian disarmament was often unsystematic and disproportionate, contributing to conflict within and between communities while undermining the government's legitimacy in conflict areas. The law requires that SPLA abuses of civilians be heard in civilian courts, which, according to NGOs, were commonly pressured to decide in favor of the SPLA. [...] The South Sudan National Police Service [...] largely of former SPLA soldiers, was ineffective, corrupt, and widely distrusted. [...] The NSS [secret service] does not have arrest or detention authority except in extraordinary cases affecting national security. Nevertheless, the NSS frequently arrested and detained opposition lea-

ders, civil society activists, NGO personnel, and journalists. Authorities rarely investigated complaints of excessive force and torture. SSNPS, SPLA, and NSS impunity was a serious problem.

As they reminded of the abuses of Khartoum's oppressive regimes in opposition to which the SPLM/A was formed in the first place, the alarming reports went unheeded and the dynamics of unchecked predation and abuse led into the present abyss.³⁹ That happened in spite of a crucial difference between the Sudanese and the South Sudanese civil wars: forces opposing the SPLM/A are usually in a situational, not a structural opposition to its rule, provided it keeps up a multi-ethnic umbrella character and resists tendencies of increasing 'ethnic monopolisation of power'. Simply abiding by the rules that formally regulate the performance of government forces and institutions, respecting officially acknowledged civil and human rights, i.e. refraining from abuses and transgression against civilians and communities, including those producing rebels in reaction to abuse, would very likely do much of the trick of 'pacification'.

What, then, can explain the tragedy of the young nation on an analytic level deeper than 'development deficits', 'power struggles' and 'antagonistic identities', i.e. phenomena we find in many peaceful contexts, too? In my view a central yet underregarded factor, the unholy trinity of intimidation, harassment and violence (IHV), the worst plague afflicting South Sudan's political and social order, has become a central yet fatal strategy of clearing the way for predatory interests and has corroded and corrupted the entire system. These tactics worked so well during the previous wars, and continue to work, even if with mixed results, that it will not be easy to get their 'evil spirit' back into the bottle. Abuse arouses protest and opposition – and produces thereby further justification for the ruthless use of brutal force once it is reassured by reliable impunity. It is alarming how IHV is used – not least by forces and people employed by 'the state', officially to protect the law and the people from abuses – to 'crush' resistance to predation and criticism of abuse. Yet social peace will remain elusive as long as criticism is not embraced as a legitimate and important antidote to self-serving deviance from both the law and

³⁹ These observations are the more credible and remarkable as the same government and other 'Western' institutions are the ones funding and training the state and its forces exposed here.

important moral principles, principles that, as I found, are not alien to illiterate people, even if they know nothing of international human and civil rights conventions.

Apart from forming a vicious habit among a heterogeneous national class of *ariàng*, IHV is a set of tools to get things the perpetrators would often not get otherwise. These things go from 'illegal taxes' or 'revenue collection' – as extortion is intriguingly called in official documents (see Uma 2011) – and plain predacious dispossession to fearful acquiescence to abuse and other forms of submissive behaviour individuals very visibly exact from fellow humans via misuse of their position, pretensions of legal authority, and the threat and/or use of force.⁴⁰ Recently, attempts of land grabbing have reached an alarming scale, as reports⁴¹ about deals with 'investors' concerning contested resources suggest, reminiscent again of awful Sudanese precedents.⁴²

In Topòth, related machinations seem to widely remain a game of the enclosed *ariàng* sector for the moment. In contrast to the three 'transit towns' along the Juba-Kenya road, I could not see the (anyway nearly absent) SPLA or SSNPS playing an import role in the life of the rural areas of EEE I came to know, except maybe as a 'virtual factor', a last resort for the *govvermen*, an ultimate threat. Enforcement of verdicts was rarely needed, and when it was, it was mostly borne by the local age group of the offender or an ad hoc 'party' of locals.

The future will tell if, as prominently in the oil and mechanisation belt of pre-secession Sudan before, central elites in South Sudan will be capable of large-scale semi-legal social robbery of resources 'customarily' belonging to communities not strong enough to stop them. Apart from the ongoing violent intra-elite distribution battles, confrontations with polities of matching military and mental strength could lead to massive bloodshed again if key players do not remain responsible and prudent enough to confine themselves to strategies keeping predation on local economies to modest levels.

An advantage for the Topòsa could be that its 'educated elite' is tiny.⁴³ Graduates are so few that its senior members have the offer-

⁴⁰ See also Pinaud 2014 for some well-observed and telling details.

⁴¹ See Funk 2010, Deng 2011.

⁴² See Johnson 2009, Komey 2010.

⁴³ Rural Topoth (i.e. Kapoeta North and East, while South consists mainly of

and-demand situation on the market for government and NGO jobs comfortably at their favour and are to a large part absorbed by the state structure, i.e., as Member of Parliament at the national or regional level, minister, director, administrator, etc. This enables them to live a salaried 'rentier life' in the environments for which they were educated, namely towns. Socialised into a modern ideal of 'the good life', Topòsa *ariàng* prefer living in the network of urbanising settlements with easier access to its pleasures, opportunities and redistribution struggles. Consequently, there are very few *govvermen* in the countryside. Underpaid and less esteemed jobs, such as teachers, nurses, etc., are almost always held by labour migrants from Kenya, Uganda, or other parts of Equatoria.

Spending much time in proto-urban administrative centres of rural Eastern Topòth (Topòsaland), I found it remarkable how little influence modern institutions seemed to have on the way conflicts were managed, decisions were made and people ran their daily affairs even in the vicinity of agents of the global modern system. The U.S. Department of State (2013) report confirms these observations beyond that region when stating: 'In the majority of communities, customary courts remained the principal providers of justice services.' It adds: 'Through the 2009 Local Government Act, traditional courts maintained primary authority to adjudicate most crimes other than murder. [They] handled approximately 90 per cent of all cases.'⁴⁴

As unemployed graduates are so rare in rural EEE, where some 95 per cent of the region's population lives, modern politics remains largely a game of towns and their population, from an indigenous perspective a small spatially, socially and culturally segregated socio-demographic minority. Decisions as to who runs for MP or becomes commissioner or *payàm* administrator are taken there, in inner circles that are since its triumph formally overwhelmingly situated within the SPLM/A structure, not by the 'rural masses.' Thus, conflicts among indigenous *ariàng* hardly cause frictions or factionalism among pastoralists. The 'traditionalist' majority usually takes such *govverman*

Kapoeta town) belongs, together with neighbouring Píbor (Mùrle, Jíye, Kachípo) and Terekéka (Mandári), to the five counties with net primary enrolment rates of below 19 per cent (see SSCSE Statistical Yearbook for Southern Sudan 2010, <http://ssnbs.org/storage/Statistics%20Year%20Book%202010%20.pdf>), and I guess in most areas it might well be below 5 per cent.

⁴⁴ See also Leonardi et al. 2011.

decisions with an attitude similar to the one maintained towards the British-, Arab- or *anyànya ariàng*. This does not mean that pastoralists lack opinions about their *govvermen's* performance or keep concerns to themselves, but they have internalised that complaints to 'higher' representatives of the *ariàng* world are the standard procedure, one that might or might not influence the respective obscure processes in their interest.

In the pastoralist sphere, the principles of individual freedom, general tolerance, open discussion of problems, consensus as the only viable way of collective decision making, and the unquestioning attitude towards joint decisions once taken, continue maintaining social peace, even as the systematic violation of all these principles plays havoc with the fillet pieces of South Sudan and tears the national fabric apart. Among pastoralists in my research area, a division of the people of a locality along political lines, e.g., backing different politicians or candidates, seemed still improbable. Neither would such issues be regarded important enough to jeopardise the conventional mode of amity, nor would matters that lead commonly to division in 'town politics' have enough appeal among the pastoralists to develop the necessary discursive and emotional power. While pastoralists continue focussing on their own economy and society, intra-*ariàng* struggles remain here largely encapsulated in the world whose inhabitants were trained in the skills necessary to participate in the competition for access to trans-global resource flows.

As a minority group from the margins of the country with only a handful of politicians, most of which are absorbed by the needs of *ariàng* tribal representation, the Topòsa elite is not amongst the competitors for central positions of power in the country. Moreover, it seems that the Topòsa *ariàng* top leadership does not to just bow to the inevitable but takes the deliberate and wise decision *not* to aspire to ascend beyond their means and venture into the perilous fields of southern factionalism. This mirrors the pastoralist attitude of staying out of '*ariàng* business'. The pastoralists concentrate on livestock, pasture, food production and sociality, their tribal *govvermen* on Eastern Equatoria State, an arena where they are strong enough to work on clientelistic hegemony. With the Àteker-typical opportunism towards 'the ruling regime' that has seen practically all of the 'ethnic elite' taking seats under the protective roof of SPLM/A under which all

crucial brokering is done, this scenario has all sides returning to the kind of considerate mutual resignation that had eased Topòsa relations with governments before.

Due to their close historical and social connection to the inner circles of the SPLA, the Dinka minority in EEE can be viewed as representing the central part of the state. In that, their control over border traffic and trade (see Walraet 2011) and their dominance in the trans-regional armed forces seem consequential. Yet, in the mosaic of ethnically defined 'political communities' (in Dyson-Hudson's [1966] sense) of which South Sudan is comprised, the need for 'local allies' is obvious.⁴⁵

In this region, ethnicity is, as emphasised by Schlee (2008, 2010), not an unfixed, merely situational negotiation of identification, but a powerful organisational and normative pattern that has determined frontlines of lethal contest as far as memory reaches back and is only slowly and gradually softening. State structures can be built on the collective force of social or 'cultural' factions of an ethno-system (Fukui). Yet the need of a central state or organisation to penetrate local societies requires specific forms of co-option of individuals across their boundaries. Since British times, this need has been met by a combination of conventional modern administration and 'native governance' as a cheap and efficient form of relating and reconciling strongly differing concepts of 'law and order'. Nonetheless, the desire to gain control through efficient monitoring of the wide landscape of local scenes was better met with another tool. One that was able to use personal ambitions of the members of a new social class alienated from its culture of origin and eager to prove itself via a doctrine of salvation: a 'revolutionary movement' acting as political army and virtual government at once. Throughout RoSS, the SPLM/A has become the backbone of *ariàng* organisation of power, resources, and intelligence. The persistence with which opposing factions cling to its logo illustrates that well.

At the same time, the current process of escalation reveals some of the extremely fractured cohesion patterns of the SPLM/A. Combined with the thorough armament of factions, traditions of predation and abuse and their coexistence with armed ethnic units to a lethal

⁴⁵ See also Leonardi et al. 2011.

cocktail, disarmament seems an obvious solution. Yet it has been nothing but a failure.

While the 'national *ariàng*' have repeatedly embarked on forceful 'disarmament' of Dinka, Nuer and Murle groups, not least around zones of contest and interest in mineral and agrarian extraction, such a thing is, in spite of similarly sporadic roaring declarations even of 'indigenous' politicians, extremely unlikely to occur in Topòth. Keeping themselves armed and ready, the Topòsa have not only proven their determination and capacity to deter even powerful predators like 'national' guerrilla armies, their area is also far too important for the *govvermen* to jeopardise the functioning arrangement⁴⁶ by antagonising attempts at subjugation and control, which would face rather bleak prospects of success. Disarmament is also unlikely because the Topòsa as a whole refrain, even if with some exceptions,⁴⁷ from exaggerating (visible) aggression towards their neighbours, as this would risk running them into the headlines and into the firing lines of embarrassed politicians.⁴⁸

The Topòsa thereby seem to be a case in point that it is not the armament of 'civilians' per se that is the most serious problem, but the political context that fosters either restraint or excess. This is the more important as innumerable disarmament exercises turned out to be catastrophic.⁴⁹ Apart from rampant abuses, looting and killing in operations, increasing the severe alienation and hostility between civilians and 'security forces', disarmament also increased violence against the now more vulnerable disarmed, and the rampant corruption all too often converts the exercises into just another form

⁴⁶ This is laid out more comprehensively in Eulenberger 2013.

⁴⁷ Exceptions include the Lauro massacre of 2007 and the Nàdapa crisis of 2009 (see Eulenberger 2009, 2013); the successful warfare against the Jíye and Súri has remained a silent one, as those communities have, in contrast to the Didinga and Turkána, no vocal elites to bring complaints into the modern public arena and no journalists lose their way into such poorly tapped remoteness.

⁴⁸ The 'decision to disarm is often reactive' (Saferworld 2012: 11), rendering it similar to pastoralist raids and decreasing its effectiveness further, while increasing casualties.

⁴⁹ See HRW 2009: 21-28, HSBA 2007, 2011, Leff 2009, Rands and LeRiche 2012, Saferworld 2012, for an EES case, see HRW 2009: 21-25 and Paterno 2008. In most cases no punishment of the uniformed offenders can be confirmed, leading to further abuses.

of 'illicit' income generation of 'armed forces' who first violently disarm to then profit from rearming.⁵⁰

It could be said that GoSS grants security to the Topòsa by allowing them to keep their well-working self-defence intact without giving them *carte blanche* to prey at will. In addition, the SPLA supports 'their' Àteker pastoralists locally at the 'national frontier', e.g., along the Nadapal-Natinga-New Site-New Cush border corridor where they block Turkána attacks and booty recovery attempts or when in 2010 a large Turkána raid, aiming at the Nyàngatom of Lotímor, was repulsed in a joint effort of the local warriors and a well-armed SPLA platoon deployed there since 2009 at the initiative of then Deputy Governor of EES George Echòm (SPLM/A), the uncontested *ariàng* leader of the Nyàngatom of South Sudan.⁵¹

Conclusion

There is a trait in the character of South Sudan's statehood that is a great chance and a great danger at the same time: Rent income and aid make the state, for the time being, quite independent from the population's production and thereby enable it to build relationships with the indigenous systems that respect their interests and institutions. On the other hand, this independence decreases the need of the state and its personnel to be on good terms with the population or to improve its situation and productivity, as the main sources of income of the emerging modern 'elite' class – rents and aid – are external anyway. The battles for positions granting access to their flows are fought by factional alliances involving armed units with differences of character reaching from multi- to sub-ethnic. Cases like Unity, Upper Nile and especially Jonglei show how explosive their merger with more 'traditional' conflicts and 'armies' can be.⁵²

Historically, Weber's monopoly scenario is a rather rare situation, and for South Sudan it would be a true novelty. Even the Pax Britannica, taking over from a state of militant tribal sovereignty,

⁵⁰ See Leff 2009: 195 and Saferworld 2012: 11.

⁵¹ The major part of this ethnic group lives most of the time or permanently in Ethiopia.

⁵² See e.g., Rands and LeRiche 2012, da Costa 2013, Rolandsen and Breidlid 2012, 2013.

enabled by a unique and never recurring armament asymmetry, never fully achieved it, much less so any subsequent government.⁵³ During the war the SPLA was one among many pitiless fighting forces and while distressingly much of its personnel continues behaving like marauders towards fellow citizens, it can show at least occasionally more commitment to protect them from external aggression than some ostensibly 'highly professional' armies.⁵⁴ Yet the hybrid character of the SPLM/A as power machine, economic redistribution system and transformation agent has also grown into a severe structural problem. The repercussions of self-serving recklessness and IHV as dominant strategy, combined with systematic impunity of abuses, served in a bed of denial, resulting in permanent failure to contain the aggression of members and factions, turn its power of integration into a force of fatal division. Together with other military organisations of often at least temporarily factional status, the SPLA/state merger continues to produce these divisions violently, both with the tremendous lack of respect and restraint practised against civilians and perceived opponents, and with the structures and culture of para-legal predation which Pinaud (2014) contextualises as part of a class formation process.

All power systems need a network of reciprocities to keep going. In indigenous Topòsa culture, genders and generations support each other in specific ways. The modern state is based on the idea that its agents commit themselves to sincerely serve the people and in return the people cooperate in their best faith. Pinaud (2014) describes an arrangement at the core of 'modern South Sudanese' power production: Commanders use their assumed powers of office and their command of armed and violent force to accumulate and redistribute wealth into a network of personal reciprocities that grants them a dominant position. Commanders can, of course, become many things beyond commanders, and nonmilitary 'strong men' can jump into

⁵³ See Kitonga 1984 on the example of fierce Topòsa-Bóya fighting during the inter-war period.

⁵⁴ I came to witness closely in 2009 and 2011 how Kenya's Turkána pastoralists were looted and massacred by attackers from across the border without the nearby Kenyan forces deployed 'for their protection' firing a single shot in their defence. This difference might be related to the fact that the SPLA is much more used to true fighting and its members are also readier to risk their own lives.

commanding positions. Providing loyal supporters and fighters with positions, dowry in livestock and in cash and other asymmetric assistance, they build up a corpus of personalised loyalty. They use it as tool and weapon in the struggles over access to resources, including office as gateway to economic, social and symbolic capital.

As success is determined by the amount of political and military power a player can amass – plus of course by his skill in using it, which includes the art of avoiding its use – and most of the here common strategies don't belong into the realm of official 'by the book procedure', South Sudan has become an arena of reckless *ariàng* contest, and regions like EEE where the small size of the *ariàng* class creates only few incentives for fierce competitiveness and repression are on the lucky side. But the worst part of the situation is that IHV have become a kind of standard toolkit among South Sudan's modern class, a popular form of expressing ambition, one that guides it into a baneful direction. But when dominant structures and classes guide ambition into ruthless, deeply anti-social attitudes and practices, we should not be surprised about outcomes as shocking as what we face here.

We should also not miss to analyse in much more depth than possible here the structural conditions of transnational resource flows which, as 'network actors', co-produce the South Sudanese tragedy as the steady nonlocal base of its players. We need to dauntlessly examine the role of socialisation into a world shaped by ideals of 'western-style' wealth, 'Sudanese-style' power and rentier existence pervading common notions of office and 'educated' life. In this respect, the EES example suggests that things are considerably better when no more than a small minority pursues them.

Although it cannot be compared to countries that have developed and adjusted state systems of social organisation for centuries or millennia and managed to prosper on conditions disadvantaging others, the South Sudanese state and its proxy agencies do at least facilitate some benefits for the population, even if rather as 'intermediaries', and in regions like EES in fact without the amount of destruction and repression with which *ariàng* endeavours devastate others. In view of that, Topòsa and Nyàngatom pastoralists are not disgruntled about 'arrested development' or the meagre existence of the state. They received the services provided by outsiders with all the

more sympathy as they were not actually expecting them, and they do a visibly better job regulating their everyday affairs by themselves anyway.

The success of the SPLM/A state in maintaining reasonable arrangements with strong and autonomous groups like the Topòsa stands, of course, in stark contrast with the generalised assessment of South Sudan's gross failure according to most of the standard criteria of global mainstream discourse: its economic inefficiency, violent, antagonistic governance and enduring 'loss of control' over large parts of its territory. Since long before the present war broke out in December 2013, publications have concentrated on 'challenges', defects, deficits and failures, and surely, the unrestrained use of IHV in the service of predation, practically unchaining 'evil' (Jok 2012) as rewarding behavioural option, can be seen ruining large parts of South Sudan before the eyes of the international fold. Yet, this is not least a result of decades of aid policies pumping resources into structures producing this tragedy. In order to see alternatives and achieve a more balanced analysis of the reasons of the ongoing disaster, it might be important to study much more intensively the socio-political life of those parts of the country that function fairly well.

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Negotiating Distributive Orders in Rural Sudan: Justification and Critique of Charitable Gifts

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This contribution¹ deals with events on a day in March 2010 in a small village in the Lower Atbara area of River Nile State in Sudan. This settlement of roughly 200 people was only recently (in 2008) recognised as a village with its own rural council, fostering expectations of access to health, education and infrastructure. But instead of state institutions reaching a settlement, much needed services were supplied by a Kuwaiti charity organisation. I describe a day on which the charity's representatives arrive in the village to pass out goats and chickens, and provide camel meat as a communal gift. A controversy develops, and the question is raised of what should guide the distribution to meet different moral expectations. My focus is on the discursive strategies both of the proponents and opponents of the established distributive order, that is, justifications and critiques (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). The aim is to show how villagers use their critical capacities to negotiate social orders and challenge institutional arrangements that contradict their understandings of fairness – in this case, an established distributive order.

Distribution Day in Um Futeima²

A strange hustle and bustle disrupts the usual early morning calm. Hamda tells the children to quiet down and pours another glass of tea for her guest Rahala,³ who arrived last night with her four children

¹ This is a shortened and reorganised version of a chapter of my dissertation *Survival at the Margins: Processing Uncertainties in Sudan*, wherein I develop some further aspects and make an argument about the management of indeterminacies (Calkins 2014).

² I have changed the name of the village and have omitted or changed the names of most actors to protect their identities.

³ For two years Hamda's husband Ubeid has been absent, working in Kuwait. Tahir, the sheikh of Um Futeima and president of the rural council, is

from nearby Goz al-Hilla. I wonder what is going on and ask Hamda's daughters. They tell me the charity is coming today. I hear the children yelling in front of Salman's house. Salman is the elder brother of Rahala, of Hamda's husband Ubeid, and of sheikh Tahir. He is called crazy and deranged. He is locked up in a one-room clay house. But on this morning something unusual happens. Salman is taken from his house and locked into another house.

Meanwhile the floor of Salman's house has been flattened and sprinkled with water to prevent the dust from being raised, and the excrement was removed. One woman brings a large plastic carpet from her house and rolls it out on the floor. Hamda's daughters bring some metal bowls and a few plastic boxes. A neighbour enters the house bringing a water canister, a teapot and some glasses. Another neighbour carries an old torn bed into the house. Then Rahala and her children sit on the bed waiting. Hamda drags the metal hearth from her house calling, 'So they know you made your tea here.' The women are obviously enjoying themselves. Sitting with them, I learn the house I thought to be Salman's is actually Rahala's. The charity gave it to her, and she made her way to Um Futeima to be there when the donors arrive, so that they don't find out that Salman lives in the house. Hamda explains that Rahala has some animals, so she doesn't stay in Um Futeima. She and her husband are not poor but have a car and 'a bit of something'.

'Santara, a car!' the women call out to me excitedly. A new Toyota pick-up truck is headed towards the mosque in the centre of Um Futeima. One of the men in the truck introduces himself as Masoud Salih, candidate of the Rashaida Free Lions (RFL) for the upcoming election (April 2010) and director of the charity's office in Edamer. Masoud explains that another truck is arriving to distribute some animals to help the poor (*al-masākīn*). He drives through Um Futeima reminding people of the election, before he returns to Edamer.

Shortly thereafter the promised truck arrives and stops next to the mosque. It is loaded with six she-goats and their kids, twelve chickens and a camel for meat. Tahir, the sheikh of Um Futeima, greets the clerk amicably and gets in the truck to take it to the houses for distribution. The truck's first stop is Tahir's house. The clerk Barak tells the two

Ubeid's younger brother. He and his family live in the house next to Hamda. Ubeid put Tahir in charge of their families and sends him money every few months.

workers on the truck to give Tahir a goat, its kid and two chickens. Tahir, his wife and three children are asked to stand in front of the house with the animals. The clerk then attaches a poster about the distribution campaign to the wall of the house and takes a photo with a digital camera, documenting the charitable act.

In the meantime a handful of villagers who have followed the truck on foot arrive at Tahir's house. They ask for a goat. One woman claiming to be among the first settlers in Um Futeima complains about being overlooked time and again. Others come and ask for animals or money. The clerk says everything will be written down and everyone will have his turn – but without writing it down. Some are disappointed and leave. Others follow the truck on foot. The truck moves on to Rahala's house, where Barak notices the family's wretched furnishings. '*Masākīn*' (poor ones), he says and pulls out a pen and paper to note something down for the first time, before handing over the animals.

Tahir quickly directs the delegation farther on to his helper Antar's house. The family receives a goat and its kid, and two chickens, and then the poster is attached and a photo taken. Zeinab and her husband Ahmed, an old impoverished couple, show up at Antar's house. There Zeinab pleads with Tahir for a goat and a kid, because her granddaughter is malnourished and the doctor prescribed a daily ration of milk. Tahir declines by repeating that everyone will receive some of the goods on the next tour. Today is just the beginning. The first six houses on the list (*sijill*) will get something and next time the next numbers on the list. Zeinab says the last time the charity came, to distribute donkey carts and donkeys, they also said more would come for everyone. She is still waiting. Zeinab tells me she has no money to buy milk for her granddaughter, that always the same people eat everything.

The truck moves to Abdel Ati's house, the sheikh of the landowning Bisharin. The goat and its kid as well as the two chickens are unloaded, and Barak takes a picture. The truck moves on to Farah Humeid, a clan sheikh. He is given the animals, a picture is taken, and then the truck drives to the schoolteacher's house, who is also Masoud Salih's son. Because the schoolteacher Hussein is absent searching for gold, his aunt takes the goat, its kid, and the two chickens for him and poses in front of his house for the obligatory picture. Finally, sheikh Tahir directs the truck to a hut, in which he has created a small shop at the

settlement's centre, next to the mosque. There the camel is slaughtered. Few Rashidi men are available. Many children and a number of Bishari men, who work in the two restaurants and run small grocery stores, gather around the slaughtering site with plastic bags in their hands. They watch the butchering men distribute the meat into around 40 piles on a large piece of thick plastic foil on the ground. Some children snatch pieces of meat and run away. Sheikh Tahir, who walks around and oversees the whole process, beats some of the children on the back and arms with his rod to keep them away from the meat.

'Is it not better we do the slaughtering inside the shop?' Tahir repeats. 'Then we can give each one his entitlement (*ḥaqq*).'

But the clerk disagrees, saying the meat is for everyone, for 'the entire village', and should be cut before everyone's eyes. After the meat is cut, Tahir begins the distribution. He hands four needy old men a pile of meat. Then the sheikh addresses a dirty and wretched looking man and asks him to come close. Tahir quickly stuffs a big pile of meat into the man's plastic sack, loudly stating, 'This is a very poor man and he has a big family. Take this also.' He stuffs meat from a second pile into the bag. Instantly, the seeming order collapses. Everyone grabs whatever he can get a hold of. Inside of a few seconds all the meat is gone. Children are fighting for the last bits, the camel's tail and head. All the while, sheikh Tahir just stands there and observes helplessly what is happening. 'Like animals,' he says.

I return to the residential quarter, where Hamda and her daughters are waiting together with Rahala and Antar's wife. 'If God wills, Tahir got some meat for us?' I tell them I stayed until the end and that Tahir did not get hold of any. The women are upset. First they blame Tahir, then Abdelrahman, Hamda's 12-year-old son, for not getting any meat. Then they turn to me asking why I didn't retrieve any. Why, when I was there as a *kawājīya* (Sudanese Arabic for foreign woman)? They should have given me some meat first and I should have demanded it. In that moment they see Abdelrahman approaching. In his hand is a small transparent plastic bag with meat. Hamda immediately prepares the fire to cook the meat. A few minutes later Antar arrives and brings a second much larger plastic bag with meat and the liver. The women put the liver in a separate bowl. As they cut the liver, Zeinab's husband Ahmed enters. Quickly, the women hide the bowl. He looks around

inquisitively and asks whether they have meat. And then whether they have liver. Hamda denies. Then she repeats my words: 'Tahir got no meat himself, everyone captured it from him. We are cooking Antar's bits.' After he leaves, Tahir, his wife and children walk over from their house. The liver is cut into small pieces and eaten raw. Only Hamda and I have our pieces grilled. Then the meat is cooked.

In the early afternoon on my way to visit Farah Humeid and his family I meet Salma and Saida as I pass the houses of these widows. They call out to me and ask me directly who ate the liver. I lie that I do not know. Farah Humeid and his daughters, who had eaten meat themselves, still crave the liver. They wished they could have had some of it. 'Did Tahir eat it?' the girls ask. 'Did they let you try it?' I do not give away who ate the liver. In the following days, more people ask me about the liver. Some ask me directly if Tahir 'captured' it; others with more cunning ask if I know how camel liver tastes, if I have ever eaten it and so forth.

Analysing the Situation

Logics of Giving Live Animals and the Selected Recipients

The six she-goats, their kids and the twelve chickens were an issue of dispute in the situation. The charity had identified scarcity of food as a problem and had planned to give the lactating she-goats to impoverished households to provide them with milk and at the same time increase their capital. Sought after by all inhabitants, only a few of them were prioritised in the distribution. Sheikh Tahir's household was given the animals first. He did not hide this. Therewith he demonstrated confidence in the validity of his privilege deriving from his authority as sheikh. The charity's representatives did not object and thus confirmed the transfer as valid. The case of Rahala and her husband Muslih is peculiar, as they do not even live in Um Futeima. Much effort was expended to hide this fact from the clerk Barak, and everyone cooperated without disclosing it. An absurdity of this charade was that Barak, who seemed rather unconcerned with people's plights, was apparently sufficiently moved by Rahala's seeming poverty to note her down for further considerations.

Rahala is sheikh Tahir's sister and is married to Muslih, one of Tahir's favourite parallel cousins. Tahir's selection of Rahala and

Muslih relates more closely to his respect for Muslih, to whom he refers as *ẓarīf* and *karīm* (noble and generous), than to patrilineal kinship and affinal ties – as many others are also related to Tahir via both descent and affinity. Thus Tahir's inclusion of Rahala and Muslih is nested in their personal relationships and likely is patterned after generalised reciprocity, where one party remains indebted until it reciprocates (Sahlins 1972/1974: 193-194).

Antar and Tahir's half-sister Noura were the subsequent household to receive the animal gift that day. Antar is completely dependent upon Tahir for his living. He runs errands for Tahir and is loyal in word and deed, for example, when Tahir is absent and others criticise him. Villagers often refer to Antar as weak and miserable or ridicule him, saying he serves, which implies a pitiable, low social status based not only on poverty but also on the incapacity to earn one's own living (Young 1988: 132). It thus is appropriate to conceive of Tahir and Antar in terms of patron and client (Mühlmann and Llaryora 1968; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981).

The next beneficiary of the distribution was Abdel Ati, the wealthiest man in Um Futeima. Abdel Ati is the sheikh of the Bisharin, a member of the rural council of Um Futeima, and the customary landowner of the land in Wadi Um Futeima. Tahir while guiding the truck to his house plainly stated, 'He is the landowner here.' By virtue of the same logic – namely a position of leadership and the confidence in the validity of this principle – Tahir had included his own household.

Next in the distribution was Farah Humeid, a clan sheikh and an old, respected man. Farah was injured severely in a car accident two years before, whereby he lost his ability to see and hear on his left side. Farah has six children with his current wife; four of them are small children. In his case neediness and a position of leadership and seniority in his clan coincide. Hussein, the schoolteacher, was the last recipient of animals. He is the son of Masoud Salih, who helped Hussein get this position as teacher in Um Futeima in the charity-funded school. The charity also pays Hussein's modest monthly salary.

Logics Governing the Meat Distribution

In contrast to the individual animal gifts, the camel for slaughter called *karāma* (generosity) was meant as a good and charitable deed for the entire village. Its meat was destined for all houses of Um Futeima, as

Barak Suleih explained. By reference to the 'entire village', Barak refused to let Tahir take the meat inside his shop and insisted upon the public butchering. Tahir, who was in charge of distributing the meat, however, selected the old and needy as first recipients. Then the dirty and wretched looking man with whom I was not acquainted. I later learned from Antar that this was one of Tahir's parallel cousins, a herder who had come from Goz al-Hilla that day to gas up his car in Um Futeima. He thus was not poor as Tahir claimed, when he put much meat into this man's plastic bag.

Evidently everyone present but me noticed that something was foul – be it because a foreigner received a share at all, the share was too large, or because they knew he was related to Tahir. This explains why the order which Tahir strove to maintain collapsed in just that moment. Antar had succeeded in laying hold of some meat, which he sent home with Abdelrahman. The more important question, however, is how the liver ended up with *ḍuwī* Tahir (lit. those of Tahir). Tahir had smuggled the liver into the bundle he gave his cousin, from whom Antar later collected most of the meat. Tahir, however, stood there until people had withdrawn to their respective homes without any meat in his hand. I had therefore believed he was among the losers in this scramble. The liver soon took on a life beyond its materiality. The 'who ate the liver?' discourse circulated for days, creating unease and leveling accusations against Tahir. The liver had become the metaphor for the unjust distribution of things in Um Futeima and the exclusion of the majority.

Logics of the Researcher's Involvement

One moment of this day illuminated my role in Um Futeima. After I had returned empty-handed from the distribution site, Hamda reproached me for not having brought home any meat. I was considered anything but an uninvolved observer. Rather I was expected to figure as an interested party to the distribution and to fetch some meat. Hamda fully recognised the potential of my social status as a *ḵawāja* (guest) and a certain popularity associated with it. She expected me to employ this instrumentally to appeal to the notion of hospitality and thus obtain a share of meat. Failing to exploit this status, which never would have occurred to me and which I would have judged professionally unethical, I failed her. The women could not understand my holding

back; why should I be bashful about asking for meat when I was not shy to move around in the male space? When Ahmed came to visit Hamda and asked *ḍuwī* Tahir if they had the liver, Hamda quickly lied. She also made use of my misleading observation that Tahir had not held on to any meat himself, stating they were only sharing what Antar got. I was already deeply entangled. What is more, I ate a part of the liver after it was grilled. At this point, I did not entirely grasp the relevance of the liver, although I knew that Sudanese generally enjoy eating liver. I became complicit with *ḍuwī* Tahir, and by lying to the two widows I also became an accomplice in the cover-up. I did not want to disclose what I knew only by being a household member and thus had circulated an untruth that I felt I had to uphold so as not to compromise my credibility. Mired as I was in the situation, I was put on the spot by the ‘who ate the liver?’ discourse, feeling I had betrayed the very people I should have supported.

Official Logics and Their Reinterpretation

In sum, a Kuwaiti charity came to a Sudanese village and distributed certain goods, but a closer look at the situation reveals highly complex interactions of diverse people, institutions, intentions and rationalities. The situation cannot be explained causally by a description of the events leading up to it. Rather the situation unfolded its own dynamics, resulting in uncertainty, as is perhaps best illustrated by the meat distribution. The openness and indeterminacy, however, does not forestall planning but rather indicates a necessary gap between planning and implementation.

The charity as an organisation is entangled with party politics. The sites for branch offices and concrete projects are planned by the charity so as to support a particular ethnic constituency – the Rashaida, a label to which the majority in Um Futeima ascribes. The Kuwaiti charity, as a collective actor with its strategic projections and calculations, was responsible for bringing about the situation described above. It sought to control the situation or at least implement measures to create some predictability through organisational forms such as plans, budgets, timetables, rules, and ways of doing things designed to direct the situation to achieve a desired outcome.

The charity works closely with the director of its branch office in Edamer, Masoud Salih, in designing initiatives for Um Futeima. He

communicates the concerns and problems of local Rashaida communities to the charity and informs his people of the charity's rules and prescriptions. To engage with his Kuwaiti counterparts in suggesting and drafting projects via Skype and Facebook, Masoud Salih is endowed with specific technological skills and equipment, such as a laptop with integrated video camera, a router and a headset. An organisational form, a material-semiotic element, is used by the charity, namely the poster. Prescribed by the organisation as a means of explaining the distribution and monitoring the transfer of resources, it was furnished in Edamer. It begins with the Bismallah and ends with appeals to God to safeguard the benefactor who financed the charity. The poster constitutes part of a specific knowledge practice. Apart from situating its donations in an Islamic model of humanitarian organisations, the poster states the organisation's general purpose of supporting the Rashaida and forging friendship and associations. Then it mentions the type of donations – chicken and meats – and indicates the village, its location and the year.

The poster is part of a complex technical tangle. Photographed with the digital camera, it is integrated into 'a chain of translations' that establish proof of distribution (Callon 1986; Latour 2005). The digital photos are transported on the camera to Edamer, where Masoud Salih uploads them onto his laptop, wirelessly linked to the internet, and sends them via email to his employers in Kuwait. There the digital photos of the poster are used as evidence vis-à-vis the charity's benefactors in justifying the use of resources and are partially displayed on the charity's website.

This procedure of attaching a poster to a home or other locale, photographing it and sending the photo via email is a means of long-distance control. It enables an assessment of whether and how resources were distributed. However, Masoud Salih's role is crucial: he sends the photos along with an email that explains who is seen in the photographs – reconfiguring the meaning of the photographed poster. Tahir likewise is an important actor. In the planning stage he cooperates closely with the charity. As local sheikh, he points out developmental problems of 'the Rashaida' in the Lower Atbara area and draws attention to individual grievances in Um Futeima, given that 'he knows the people', as Masoud Salih told me. The two together interpreted the

charity's logic, renegotiated it and predetermined who was to be included in the distributive order witnessed during the day.

Other forms of coordination held together and were not questioned even in this situation of uncertainty. Three stable 'invested forms' in the sense of Thévenot (1984) were the ethnic category 'Rashaida' as well as the classifications 'the poor' and 'the entire village'. Reference to 'Rashaida' prompted ethnic solidarity and legitimised excluding other villagers, while 'the poor' were predefined by the charity as the intended recipients of livestock and 'the entire village' as recipients of camel meat. A regulation regarding resource transfers to the category of the poor in Um Futeima excludes labour migrants to the Gulf from all individual gifts, as these usually are well-off. Through this regulation and its orientation towards charity for the poor, the Kuwaiti sponsors frame who can count as poor and deserves to be included in the transfers. Therefore the charity's intention and its regulations did provide an important reference for the entire distribution and its evaluation, but it is important to remember that the charity's purposes and its explicit stipulations were transmitted via Masoud Salih.

In contrast to planning which aims at a predetermined goal, implementation refers to the application of official regulations. But in actual practice implementation encompasses pragmatic adaptations of organisational forms, what is often referred to as 'unofficial' or 'informal'. I follow Meyer and Rowan's (1977: 340-343) analysis in asserting that organisations, such as the charity under consideration, do not function solely according to their rules and procedures. Rather official blueprints have to be protected from the uncertainties of success by 'loosely coupling' the formal structures and everyday practices (Meyer and Rowan 1977: 340-341). Thus, the Kuwaiti charity as a formal organisation depends upon informal practices and improvisations of its employees, like those manifested during the distribution. Sheikh Tahir was involved both in the planning and implementation stages. In the actual distribution, he referred to an allocative technology associated with formal organisation, namely assigning people a number on a list. The idea of a list is connected to a sequential arrangement and as this is missing, villagers immediately contest it.

The charity was represented in the distribution through Barak, a subordinate clerk at the charity's office in Edamer and also an RFL-member, however, he did not appear as being fully in the picture. For

instance, when the truck arrived in Um Futeima, it is unclear whether Barak already knew who was to be included in the livestock distribution. He described his own task as disinterestedly defending the charity's interests in the distribution, that is, benefiting poor Rashaida and abiding by the charity's directions. This was confirmed when he resisted Tahir's suggestion to butcher the meat inside his shop and promoted transparency. Given this attitude, Tahir was compelled to trick him in Rahala's case. To avoid allegation of bias or corruption, the clerk underlined that he has no kin ties in Um Futeima. In the Latourian terminology he claimed to be a mere 'intermediary' (Latour 2005: 39) between the charity and the people of Um Futeima. Rahala's case illustrated his mediation: he took note of Rahala's (seeming) poverty to remember her, when he consults with Masoud Salih about who should be included in future distributions. Thence, the clerk also tried to intervene in determining the distributive order, which, however, is not meant to imply that his intention of helping 'the poor' is insincere. Though the 'poor' should benefit from the livestock gift, who were to be included in this category was controversial.

An in-situ adaptation of the official plan to benefit the 'entire village' through the meat distribution manifested itself. Tahir began the distribution according to the principle of seniority coinciding with relative neediness. This logic was then displaced by his hidden selfish interest. Given that the meat distribution resulted in chaos and the plan to include 'the entire village' failed, I wonder why Tahir and not the clerk took charge of distributing in the first place. Even if one assumes that the charity's plan to include all households in the meat distribution would not be high-jacked by the eruption of a chaotic scramble, its implementation still demanded pragmatic adjustments.

The adjustments had to do with a powerful institution in eastern Sudan, which constrained the access of people to the butchering site: the division of space into men's and women's perimeters. The settlement's centre with the market and mosque are classified as male space. It is considered shameful for a Rashaida woman to cross it; so doing is likened to a betrayal of the female gender (Young 1988: 38-39). The instituted difference between male and female in the division of space and the sanctioning of transgression (*ʿaqyb*) excluded women – except the very old and poor – from a more active participation in the distribution. The fact that many men were absent for several days or

entire weeks searching for gold or are long-term labour migrants to the Gulf States hindered women from going to the slaughtering site. The unequal access opportunities to the site impeded many families' presence at the meat distribution. Finally, it was conspicuous that the reference to all inhabitants of Um Futeima excluded the two handfuls of Sudanese construction workers (mainly identifying as Nuba, Nuer and Shilluk), who did not even appear for the distribution. My presence as an external observer that posed questions and took pictures also may have influenced the practical implementation of the official rules. Barak Suleih was suspicious about my interest in what was happening. Perhaps this added to his staging himself as mere advocate of the charity, whereas Tahir invited me to accompany and watch the distribution. He evidently believed I would judge the actual distribution with all its tinkering of the official rules and purposes as appropriate. Tahir was my entry point to the settlement, a prized informant, and I had become a member of his extended household. He likely read our relationship in terms of generalised reciprocity and believed that my loyalty was an obligation of propriety (*hišma*) – a feeling I indeed shared but not without misgivings.⁴ My presence may also have affected the implementation in as much as others addressed their critique of Tahir and of the distribution to me, as if I was there to mediate or to judge.

In carrying out the 'official' distributive logic emanating from the charity, other considerations and local circumstances came into play. This can be described as a difference between reality and world (Boltanski 2011: 91): reality as the institutional product, here the product of the charity's semantic work in defining a problem, planning and organising a response as well as seeking to secure a certain outcome, and the world as people's immersion in the flow of life that contradicts what is presented as reality. The disparity resulted in various tensions which prompted people to express their moral under-

⁴ Tahir intervened in two minor cases of sexual harassment, taking this as an offence against his honour, and he continually supported my position and research, also patiently sitting with me for hours recollecting genealogies. In view of this obvious proximity and friendly relations between Tahir and myself, it might seem perplexing that our neighbour Zeinab confided in me by criticising Tahir and the justice of distributions. She vented her anger that things were always 'eaten' by the same people – mainly referring to Tahir, while I was a member of *duwi* Tahir. I read her critique of Tahir as an expression of confidence based on the friendship we had built up in the preceding weeks during many mutual visits.

standings, for instance, regarding the logic of giving livestock to poor households and the observed distributive order. In the following I direct attention to the discursive resources that were deployed in the controversy through justification and critique (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006).

Controversies about a Just Distribution

Justifying the Distribution

The poster was already analysed, but it adds a discursive position to the situation, as it expresses the charity's intention of doing good deeds and distributing meat. Hence, it proclaims the charity's purpose, documents the act of giving, and plays an important role in justifying the use of resources vis-à-vis the benefactors in Kuwait. In line with the charity's overall objective of benefiting 'the poor', the charity's regulation concerning the exclusion of families with members in the Gulf States was cited as justification in support of the distributive order. Yet, the recipients Abdel Ati, Muslih, and Farah have a record of labour migration to the Gulf, while Tahir was in charge of caring for his brother Ubeid's family and profits greatly from the remittances sent to him every few months. The regulation was creatively translated. First, Masoud Salih as spokesperson of the charity communicated the charity's purpose. The villagers, including Tahir, were unable to verify the validity of his representations. But they have modelled much of their justifications and critique on the charity's normative orientations (as transmitted via Masoud Salih) and thus confirmed them (Boltanski 2011). Second, Masoud Salih and Tahir applied the regulation only to current migrants. Past episodes as migrants were regarded as irrelevant for the distribution. Given the circular character of labour migration with several months abroad and several months in Sudan, this interpretation contrasts with the ethic of helping the poor but harmonises with other principles that orient the distribution. Third, while Masoud Salih still spoke of the exclusion of migrants and their extended families (*dār*), Tahir had reinterpreted this rule. He talked about labour migrants and their house (*bayt*), referring to family in a very narrow sense as father, mother and their children. Hence, the charity's regulation was translated in such a way to Um Futeima that all core families (father, mother, children) that did not have a member

(unmarried son or father) abroad in labour migration theoretically qualified as 'poor', including sheikh Tahir. The remittances that Tahir's brother Ubeid sent him as head of an extended family therewith only meant that Hamda and her children were excluded.

That Tahir assumed the privileges of the sheikhs to be self-evident can also be explained by reference to the hierarchical organisation within a nomadic Rashaida camp (Young 1988). Harmony was achieved by recognising the final authority of the camp's senior man (Young 1988: 102-103). Membership in a camp was tied to the expectation of displaying *ḥiṣma* towards the camp's senior, that is, to be respectful of him, to avoid harming his reputation and to exercise self-restraint in situations of conflict. *Ḥiṣma* means propriety, humility, modesty and shame. Thus *ḥiṣma* – not kinship, descent or affinity – was the defining norm of relations within a nomadic camp. The senior man reciprocated by granting camp members security, access to jointly used re-sources, such as water sources or pastures, and herding collectives (Young 1988: 128-132, 136). The context has changed very much, however, from the 1980s as people are increasingly settled. By prioritising the sheikhs in the distribution of things and justifying this by reference to their leadership and seniority, Tahir and Masoud Salih appropriated the norm of *ḥiṣma* and translated it to the settled context of Um Futeima.

Although the charity provided the orientation for the distribution of livestock and meat, Tahir's interpretations of the rule swayed the distribution of animals to his own advantage. This was so apparent that he faced criticism and felt compelled to justify the logic of the entire distribution publicly. He did this by reference to disparate principles. In justifying the distribution, Tahir highlighted that the first six numbers on 'the list' (*as-sijill*) would receive something. Yet, what 'the list' means and who composed it is dubious. Tahir brought forth another point: the households that received animals had prior to this been given a house. All in all 15 houses were built by the charity in Um Futeima. Thus whoever did not receive a house had no place on 'the list' and no place in the distributive order. Moreover, as most people are not formally educated and do not read and write, referring to a list and numbers is an abstract, superimposed technology of bureaucratic governance and also one that enforces Tahir's position as spokesperson, because as an educated man he knows such technologies. By

stressing the need to follow the list as an allocative principle, Tahir aimed at delegating responsibility for the distribution to a neutral organisational element. However, as there was no transparency in the composition of the list and no evidence of its actual existence with the charity, people in the situation voiced their mistrust in Tahir as spokesperson, criticising the list as arbitrary and thus prompting further justification (Boltanski 2011: 84-86).

Tahir stressed neediness as a principle in the cases of Antar and of Farah Humeid. What he, however, did not mention is that Farah was also entitled due to his status as a local clan leader, as by the same token the allocation of animals to Abdel Ati and Tahir himself was taken as self-evident. Masoud Salih had a say in including his son Hussein in the distribution. Tahir embedded this in an argument about meritocracy according to which the schoolteacher needed to be compensated for leaving the city to teach the ordinary and simple. This meritocratic rationality was not contested, although it so clearly interfered with a prioritisation of kin. Tahir was silent about Rahala's inclusion. Her case was most problematic, as Tahir even took a risk to trick his closest allies – Masoud Salih and clerk Barak – to believe in the family's neediness. Neither a resident, nor poor, she received animals solely based on her family's personal relationships to Tahir.

The distribution of the meat as different from the transfer of livestock was justified by the wish to benefit 'the entire village'. This relates to a democratic principle – that all people of Um Futeima irrespective of their kin ties or ethnic affiliations should be included in the distribution of things, symbolised by the communal slaughter. This stance was explicitly advanced by Barak as a representative of the charity. This democratic principle is based on the norm of equality, which contradicts the norm of *hišma*. In contrast to the democratic idea that officially guides the meat distribution, Tahir selected the first recipients by referring to seniority coinciding with neediness, which was then displaced by his own (hidden) selfish interest in the meat.

Criticising the Distribution

Given that most people were sidelined, villagers criticised Tahir's justifications in different ways. The discourse on who ate the liver was one powerful example. People's arguments shed light on their moral understandings of how the resources should be distributed. By voicing

their criticism people were breaking with the norm of *hišma*, indicating their dissatisfaction with the sheikhs – above all Tahir.⁵ Both people that are considered the well-off or and the poor and irrespective of clan affiliation in private conversations refuted Tahir's justification by referring to the purpose of the charity to help the poor (*masākīn*). They argued that the poorest did not benefit from the distribution. Giving to the poor relates to ideas of Islamic charity and the norm of *karāma*, which literally means generosity, but also nobleness and high esteem. Being *karīm* implies being a charitable, gracious, and also precious person and thus is connected to high social prestige. Generosity is expected of whoever professes to be a leader. For instance, people told me about Tahir, 'This is not a sheikh. Haven't you seen, he has nothing to give.'

Another line of argument was brought forth, namely that the Bisharin – that is Abdel Ati – received some goods, while Rashaida were overlooked. This argument is couched in ethnic terms differentiating between Rashaida and Bisharin. Especially Tahir's neighbours and kin who were overlooked demanded that this principle be implemented as the axis of in/exclusion. In their understanding, the notion of tribal solidarity that officially motivates the charity should have been prioritised. With a regard to Tahir's relatives, the argument is basically a reinterpretation of an appeal to a more inclusive kin logic. Also it was argued that I should have been included in the distribution of meat based on a norm of hospitality. While reflecting some further moral understandings of the situation, neither 'ethnicity' nor 'hospitality' as a normative claim had much purchase on the situation. In this situation, people and their critiques remained fragmented and dispersed. No collective action emerged and no groups formed to protest the unjust distribution.

The case of Id Aid sheds some light on the reticence to criticise. In late 2009, Id accused Masoud Salih and Tahir publicly of appropriating all things for themselves. Masoud Salih took him to court, accusing him

⁵ This culminated in the refusal to cooperate at the meat distribution. With permanent settlement a new problem emerged: many mentioned that they are not used to living permanently next to people with whom they do not get along with. Formerly, dissatisfaction with a sheikh or other camp members meant that the people in question would move on in their tents and join a senior that they respected (Young 1988: 117). The immobile habitats thus posed new challenges to cooperation.

of slander. Tahir and another local testified against him. In January 2010, Id was sentenced to a short term in prison and payment of 3,000 Sudanese pounds (SDG). As he did not find a following that stood behind his cause, he alone suffered the penalty. Yet, the controversy in Um Futeima was not closed by taking Id to court. Resistance was again adumbrated in the refusal to cooperate with Tahir in the distribution of the camel meat.

Discursive Silences

The case of Id Aid likely deterred others from expressing direct criticism, especially of Masoud Salih. Albeit a democratic logic was invoked as official principle, it compelled none of the actors to speak for an inclusion of the construction workers, who stayed in Um Futeima for extended periods. Also nobody argued that they should be included based on hospitality as was argued with respect to me. This likely relates to racist underpinnings of people who pride themselves in being real Arabs and not 'blacks' (*zurq*). One position never mentioned explicitly in Tahir's justifications, although it determined distributive patterns, was prioritisation of one's kin and especially *'awlād ʿamm*. And it was the main cause of critique: people criticised that the poor were neither included in the distribution nor given their turn (referring to the list). Rather, always 'the same people', namely, Tahir's and Masoud Salih's kin, were included. This criticism may be surprising given the ubiquity of brotherliness. A person is morally obliged to help his kin, especially paternal parallel cousins. Failing to help one's kin when others believe it is in one's power will severely harm a person's reputation and mean he can no longer depend upon others for support in times of need. Tahir participates in this norm and therefore to a certain extent is expected to bend the rules to redistribute some things to his kin. His reputation among his kin is largely dependent upon his redistributive generosity; however; the same is true at the community level. But given the overall poverty and that there are only a few goods to distribute, kin ties are assigned the priority.

Another critique not made was that the charity brings too few things. This relates to a much bigger concern central to many of the armed conflicts in Sudan. While people criticise the entire process of distribution and the key actors, they do not criticise the Sudanese

government. They do not ask why the state does not provide for its citizens. Or why a relief organisation from another country is seen as the only source of help for the poor. Where are state institutions?

Conclusion

On the day of charitable distribution of livestock and meat to Um Futeima village in northeastern Sudan, different actors employ a plurality of argumentative resources to express their understandings of a just distribution. Through justification and critique all actors draw upon more general moral understandings of social order, which they appropriate in their arguments. Some of the normative dimensions that Young described in the 1980s among nomadic Rashaida pastoralists in Sudan, like *hišma*, are referred to but adapted to the settled context. Not only did different actors change and adapt normative principles to the situation, but they also drew upon norms of cooperation from elsewhere to express their sense of social justice – like the democratic logic or the call to follow bureaucratic procedure. Actors applied a plurality of principles for coordination and managed to reach a compromise between contradictory approaches. Examining the transnational transfers to Um Futeima, it seems that the distribution largely is a compromise negotiated between the charity's official rules and Masoud Salih's and Tahir's interpretations thereof in interaction with people's critiques of what is going on. The charity as the donor is powerful in that it supplies orientations for the distribution: ethnic identity as selection criteria for the site, alleviation of poverty through the provision of milk and eggs from the animal gifts, and a democratic ethos for the sharing of the camel meat. It stabilised these normative orientations by deploying different material-semiotic tangles: the rule to exclude labour migrants to the Gulf, the numbering of houses to produce knowledge of who is 'out there', and the poster attesting to the charity's purpose together with the digital camera and the computer used to document and relay news of the distribution. The idea of 'the list' which Tahir uttered might also have to do with the charity's administrative technologies.

The task of Masoud Salih and Tahir was to translate the charity's blueprints to Um Futeima. They extracted different elements from different regimes of justification and drew upon disparate, at times

contradictory 'orders of worth', reassembling them in a new, but contested, logic of distribution (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Among the principles are prioritising members of one's kin group, adapting *ḥiṣma* relations to privilege the sheikhs, and reinterpreting the rules regarding the in/exclusion of international labour migrants. This tinkering, readjusting and situational adapting of principles is the so-called work of transformation or form-giving, which must be done to reach any (un)stable agreement (Wagner 1993: 467; Thévenot 1984).

Though agreement did not prevail, people in Um Futeima to a certain extent still cooperated with the distributive order, at least until the turning point of the meat distribution. The asymmetries in the ability to define the meaning and identity of entities led to an imperfect compromise. The compromise, that is, the actual distributive logic, is a pragmatic agreement which combines contradictory principles and enables people to cooperate and move on, to temporally set aside their different understandings and views. For instance, *ḥiṣma* contradicts the democratic principle that guides at least some of the transfers. The norm of *karāma* for the poor is in opposition with an allegedly neutral bureaucratic procedure, but also with the practice of privileging the sheikhs and the way the rule regarding the inclusion of labour migrants was translated. Such contradictory elements in the emerging distributive order render it highly fragile. Tensions may escalate in controversies when people begin to doubt what is presented to them as reality and critique the justice of what they are witnessing (Boltanski 2011: 99). But there are also some connections. The democratic and bureaucratic principles invoke similar notions of equality and neutrality. There is also a connection between *ḥiṣma*, *karāma* and hospitality namely in that these diverse principles establish a priority group based on belonging – either among the sheikhs, the poor, or the guests. Likewise, prioritising one's kin and/or ethnic group relates to imaginings of belonging and structures of in/exclusion along the invoked socialities. Belonging to certain social groups is an important axis in people's everyday understanding along which they frame their entitlement to certain resources and benefits – in a setting where the Sudanese state provides little security for its citizens. Ethnicity is a salient category in the political sphere in contemporary Sudan. During the distribution in Um Futeima it is no more than one way of imagining identity next to other ascriptive categories,

such as 'the poor', 'the sheikhs', or 'the kin (*al-'ahl*)'. Yet, given that benefiting 'the poor' is the official motivation provided by the charity and that it is discursively reproduced in justification and critique indicates that this principle is viewed as the most legitimate, although its definition is contested.

The foregoing analysis contributes to understanding how norms of cooperation are situationally constituted and contested. Limits of cooperation are connected to the tension between different understandings of social justice, the question of who should be entitled to profit from incoming resources. Thereby cleavages have become apparent between reality – the representations of the charity's official norms – and the world – the way these have been translated into the actual logic of distribution that people witness. People used their experiences of this difference to express their moral expectations of how a just distribution should be organised, exposing the established institutional order as unjust. During the meat distribution, chaos breaks forth, marking the end of cooperation with Tahir. This underlines the fragility of the order he represents and points to a common concern around which new forms of coordination may emerge.

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Greedy Donors? Uncertainty and the Organisation of Seed Distribution in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan

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In April 2005, the INGO Concern Worldwide started together with the NGO Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (NRRDO) a seed bank programme in Kubang, a village of about 4,000 inhabitants in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan.² In the first season, 103 farmers were given seeds of sorghum and sesame, beans and groundnuts. The programme required that farmers give back the same amount of seeds but allowed them to keep the surplus. This worked well in 2006. However, only 68 farmers were still participating in April 2007, and few returned what had been given to them; shortly later the programme stopped.

The director of NRRDO convened a meeting to discuss this crisis. During the meeting, people basically reacted in two ways. Some voiced the fear that non-compliance with the rules of the programme would lead to a complete withdrawal of donations from their area; therefore they demanded from those still owing seeds to give them back. Others countered with a question: Why should we, who are already poor, have to return something given to us?

¹ The documentation of this case is based on qualitative fieldwork in the village Kubang, South Kordofan, Sudan, in April 2009 and March 2010, and in the state capital Kadugli in January 2010. The key informants were the local contact person of the seed bank programme, the local director of the INGO in charge of the seed bank programme, and agricultural extension officials. Written documents like distribution lists were retrieved from these informants; their statements were triangulated with statements of involved farmers.

² The alternate naming of the region as Nuba Mountains or South Kordofan has several political and socio-economic implications (see Komey 2005: 181). In short, 'Nuba Mountains' combines a topographically localising element (a mountainous area about 29-31° E and 10-12° N) and a marker of identity ('Nuba'); the latter is stressed by using this name. South Kordofan is the official name of the federal state, in which most of the Nuba Mountains lie; this term is as contested as the governmental system using it.

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss what this simple question implies. I analyse its context and relate it to ongoing debates on uncertainty and rules of distribution in the frame of programmes of seed improvement.

The so-called Green Revolution established seeds and their qualities as a focal point for the development of agricultural production. Subsequently, many countries were covered with networks of agricultural research stations, agricultural extension, and seed banks, whose function was to develop and distribute new seed varieties promising higher yields and better resilience.

In the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan, Sudan, this seed distribution process unfolded mostly from the 1960s to the 1980s. Before its success or failure could be clearly established, the economic deterioration of the 1980s, 20 years of civil war, and the dismantling of previous institutional structures after a military coup in 1989 led to an overall decay of the situation. A large-scale rehabilitation of the agricultural sector was initiated by the government only in 2008, in a period without large-scale violence that lasted from 2002 to 2011. But this small progress is being extinguished by the return to violent destruction since mid-2011.

A part of these rehabilitation efforts was a governmental seed bank programme. But in the years of decay, centralised governmental research institutions had become disconnected from a network of experimental farms and agricultural extensions. This led to a situation in which seed distribution was allegedly intended to increase small farmers' social security but actually empowered mostly commercial seed companies, whose products did not necessarily fit local soils. Subsistence farmers had to decide each season between a conservative approach to seed selection, using local varieties with which they are familiar, and taking risks with new, unfamiliar, but allegedly improved varieties, while knowing they cannot compensate for a failed harvest.

During the war INGOs had begun to fill gaps of governmental engagement and attempted to transform their intervention from 'relief' to 'development'. Efforts were made to establish financially sustainable institutions, which would continue to perform after the intervention. But many programmes, such as seed credits, often failed to stabilise. New rules of distribution most often did not become legiti-

mate and binding, because they failed to overcome uncertainty about the relations between givers and receivers and the uncertainty of outcomes for actors whose livelihoods depend on secure yields.

Next, I review debates on uncertainties in relations of reciprocity. I then contextualise the question raised by farmers at the beginning of this chapter by analysing the political situation and connecting it to theoretical debates.

Uncertainty of Seeds and Their Distribution

Uncertainties have been addressed in a long tradition of anthropological and sociological studies. Jenkins, Jessen and Steffen (2005: 10) argued, however, that a gap separates 'analyses concerned with structural conditions or political economy [...] and work that is concerned with individual agency and the human capacity to deal with situations of crisis.' Both directions of observation have to deal with the question of what is being done, materially or symbolically, to reduce uncertainty and increase predictability. The negotiation of this process as well as the negotiation of control takes place in social relations. Strategies, plans, dreams, and hopes come up, and sets of resources are used through 'substances, artefacts and techniques' to cope with situations, where 'there are generally alternatives available, which in themselves encourage further uncertainty about which is the correct response to a particular problem' (Jenkins, Jessen and Steffen 2005: 10-11).

The concern of 'the modern state and its agencies is the coordination of attempts to foster greater certainty and predictability at the systemic level' (Jenkins, Jessen and Steffen 2005: 18). To this end, innovative solutions to deal with sources of uncertainty have to be found; these 'innovations' are to some extent new and thus somehow unpredictable and uncertain.

Seeds have characteristics concerning how they react to certain soils, for instance, how much they reproduce, and how resilient they are against adverse forces, such as pests, and against a lack of water and nutrients. The constant problem from the viewpoint of a cultivator is that many unknown variables may lead to a better or worse harvest. Rains, winds, birds, insects, rodents, cattle, drought, humidity, etc. can destroy what is supposed to be consumed or sold.

The widespread leap in the development of agricultural productivity, called the Green Revolution, concentrated on seed improvement. The ability to produce a high yield and to survive adverse forces was inscribed into seeds through a complex process of experimentation and transformation. By being isolated and monitored in controlled conditions and mixed with unprecedented partners, something happened to the seeds that never happened before – as Latour would have it (1983: 147).

Let me present part of Latour's argument from 'Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World' to unfold some of the aspects connected to this process. Latour described how Pasteur tried to 'overpower' the anthrax bacillus to kill it; seeds were empowered to prosper. This powerful way, in Latour's sense, from the field to the laboratory and back to the field, still needs to be translated in a way convincing to those who are not participants in the laboratory and do not know what is going on inside it. The allegedly improved seed still has to prove itself outside experimental isolation; its being better has to be translated so farmers accept it as serving 'their own ends' (Latour 1983: 151). This can be achieved by a sort of implicit 'contract' saying the offered solution will indeed serve the farmers' interests. The question at hand thus is how this contract is negotiated and how the seeds from the laboratory are brought back to the field, still being part of the experimental setting, but also being part of the farmers' setting. A strategy to reach that aim is field trial and the extension of institutional reference points to a distributive network.

The question of uncertainty and rules of distribution gained a new quality with the emergence of biotechnological seed regimes (Jasanoff 2006). While the main engineer of the first 'revolution', Norman Borlaug, had experimented with breeding techniques such as back-crossing, the new technology entered even the subcellular level. The issues at stake became apparent in multiple forms of resistance, which challenged the centralised ownership of these technologies and the power achieved through them (Jasanoff 2006: 277, 284). A striking example of the corporate character of biotechnology's global expansion is the company Monsanto, which succeeded in registering its

transformations of nature as legally protected property and developed very aggressive strategies to extend distribution.³

The radical pro and contra positions, the former with a strong claim of scientific authority (Jasanoff 2006: 285), indicated that complex entanglements and ambiguities are travelling with these technologies. Jasanoff highlighted that:

blindness to technology's disruption of established forms of life, underwritten by the allegedly scientific power of risk assessment, has fuelled much of the criticism of agricultural biotechnology in the global South. [...] Modern biotechnology [...] provides a discourse of development that continues colonial traditions, although the agents, recipients, and specific mechanisms of the development project have been partially reconfigured in modern times. (Jasanoff 2006: 288-289)

The colonial traditions are further empowered by defining the 'underdeveloped beneficiaries' of biotechnological solutions as 'recipients' without alternatives (Jasanoff 2006: 289-290), and thus without choices, as subjects of a new type of empire.⁴

In the wake of the 'Green Revolution', which in some places successfully increased food availability, the problem may have been disorganised distribution rather than biotechnological innovation. While this disregards the issues of entanglement described up to this point, it evokes a division of labour, which can be read as a practical approach to the perceived problem. The starting point is the differentiation between the source of the product, and its affordability

³ Jasanoff (2006: footnote 50) cited several examples, among them the terminator gene that sparked widespread protests in the USA. It 'would have disabled grain seeds from sprouting in consecutive years,' thus forcing the customers to acquire new seeds from the company every year. This commercial monopoly inscribed into biotechnologically reassembled nature is a climax of the inscription of biological and economic aspects into non-human entities.

⁴ Bonneuil (1999: 274) provided an example for how the introduction of 'improved' varieties by way of seed lending under colonial rule in Senegal became a central tool of administrative control. This was achieved by 'educating' subjects to be modern farmers as 'objects of expert knowledge and targets for state intervention'. This, in the sense of Foucault's *dispositifs*, was possible by creating new mechanisms for agricultural reproduction based on seed lending, which rendered 'the natural and the social worlds at once more transparent, more amenable to control and more productive' (Bonneuil 1999: 274).

and accessibility. A focus on the latter characterises many relief and development programmes.

Different security situations have been standardised by the UN system, resulting in a significant distinction between 'relief' and 'development'. The change from one to the other is not simply a logistic turn from distribution of stuff to distribution of practices. It also implies a change from understanding beneficiaries as receivers of gifts to conceiving of them as voluntary economic actors, who can be expected to have strategies, react to incentives, etc. This voluntary player is not embedded in power relations but interacting with other players in 'the market'. This market, however, has to have a chance to unfold freely; this freedom is limited or even threatened by what is encapsulated in the terms 'security' and 'the state'.

Who is in charge at each level is more or less defined. The 'beneficiaries' are subjectified and for the most part not actively involved. Once addressed as gift-takers, they can suddenly become voluntary borrowers. But after a whole generation grew up under the shadow of war, the subjects of this reconsideration may not move as smoothly as presumed from being recipients of gifts to being voluntary risk-takers.

A reference to anthropological debates on reciprocity can illuminate what is at stake in giving and receiving. Sahlins (1972: 189) stated that '[r]eciprocity stipulates two sides, two distinct social-economic interests. Reciprocity can establish solidary relations, insofar as the material flow suggests assistance or mutual benefit, yet the social fact of sides is inescapable.' With his differentiation of generalised, balanced and negative reciprocity, he furthermore introduced reciprocity as a marker of socio-economic distance, both vertically (asymmetric) and horizontally (symmetric). Generalised reciprocity, he specified, can be found in the realms of assumed altruism, of generosity, *noblesse oblige*, voluntary sharing; the common feature is the absence of direct repayment. '[T]he expectation of reciprocity is indefinite [...]. Failure to reciprocate does not cause the giver of stuff to stop giving: the goods move one way, in favor of the have-not, for a very long period' (Sahlins 1972: 194).

Such an understanding suggests that the social-economic relation changes the moment the giver demands direct repayment. He can easily be accused of lacking what he is expected to have: generosity, *noblesse*, or the will to share. While Sahlins had a 'primitive society' in

mind, what is relevant is that gifts which cannot be returned create a socio-economic distance. A gift cannot be calculated, and therefore it cannot be returned by an equivalent. A constant 'shadow of credit' hangs over those involved in the exchange of gift and counter-gift, creating an integrative continuity between them, whatever it may be that empowers the shadow. Insofar as socio-economic distance cannot be calculated either, its negotiation is always marked by moments of uncertainty. Such uncertainty was experienced during the seed programme discussed here as well.

Seed Distribution in Sudan

The goal of tackling food security problems through scientific innovations pervades the political rhetoric of northern Sudan's governmental development programmes, most strikingly its Agricultural Revival Programme launched in 2008. Its ambitious programme was hardly implemented in the Nuba Mountains, although there were some activities concerning seed banks and the scientific network supporting them.

The programme's main report declared that a core problem of the agricultural sector is 'weak research and extension services and shortage of improved seeds' (Republic of Sudan 2008: 12). A plan to address this gap envisioned 'the village [as] the centre for dissemination of information and distribution of inputs, agricultural services, credit, training and extension' (Republic of Sudan 2008: 31). It earmarked 25 million Sudanese pounds for the 'provision of improved seeds to farmers free of charge' in states with a rain-fed farming sector (Republic of Sudan 2008: 47). The Agricultural Commodities Council was established to 'emphasize sorghum production in the rain-fed sector and reduce irrigated area under sorghum' and 'support a programme for collection of germplasm of sorghum and millet and improve and multiply improved sorghum and millet seeds' (Republic of Sudan 2008: 61). At the same time, strong links of research, education, and quality control between scientists, producers, and politicians should support decision-making processes and the dissemination of information, while markets 'equipped with up-to-date technologies [...] ensure quality control, implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary and food safety measures' (Republic of Sudan 2008: 31).

In spite of these grand national plans, from the perspective of agricultural extension officials in Kadugli, the state capital of South Kordofan, nothing had been done to address structural problems in the region up to 2010. The technical supervisor of the Agricultural Extension Programme indicated that the system was working well until the 1980s.⁵ Then the governmental Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC) sent samples of new seeds to the local research stations, which were sowed on experimental farms, and the results were reported. This system broke down, budgets for studies were cut, and today only some young graduates without experience are sent to peripheral research stations, while more experienced researchers stay in larger urban centres like El Obeid and Medani.⁶

After the war, the ARC continued to distribute 'improved' seeds, which were tested only in El Obeid and around Medani, in environmental conditions very different from those in Kubang. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry now received seeds from the commercial Arab Corporation for Seeds in El Obeid, which were distributed through the seed bank system.⁷

According to its technical supervisor, the system was supposed to work in such a way that the Village Development Committees receive seeds as a loan, which seeds have to be paid back after the harvest. The problems started with repayment, which either failed to materialise or consisted of inferior seeds, mechanically damaged by

⁵ Interview in Kadugli, 19 January 2010. The most thorough study of agricultural development programmes up to the 1980s, Ibrahim 1988, does not mention this system. This suggests that even by then the impact of the system was rather limited.

⁶ Casas, Solh and Hafez 1999 specified the development of the Agricultural Research Corporation (since 1967, before Agricultural Research Division). They noted not only a strong 'brain drain' during the 1990s because of low salaries (Casas, Solh and Hafez 1999: 129), but also an uneven territorial distribution of researchers: "80 and 61 senior researchers are concentrated in Gezira Research Station and the Khartoum units, respectively, while the remaining are thinly spread over 18 other research stations [...] mostly located in the rainfed regions which are the poorest of the country and do not have the critical mass for meeting the regional AR needs. Some efforts have been undertaken for insuring a better territorial distribution of the staff, but conditions of life and work in remote areas are not attractive." (Casas, Solh and Hafez 1999: 129).

⁷ IFAD's Office of Evaluation regarded the absence of a sustainable seed supply system as a central impediment for agricultural development programmes in Sudan (IFAD 2009: 24).

threshing, infested by germs, or mixed with dirt. These inferior seeds were sold to communities without a local storeroom, and the difference in value between the original and the inferior seeds was compensated by IFAD.

To have a sustainable system, staff of the seed banks attempted to build on existing practices of seed selection in the Nuba Mountains, whereby farmers hang selected ears of corn on trees to sow them the following season. Referring to such practices, the technical supervisor assumed, may help highlight the importance of returning only good seeds, because seed banks work only by contracts wherein the borrower agrees to give back clean, high-value seeds. More research would be needed, so his conclusion, to recommend how to educate communities to change practices inappropriate for the improved seeds: early sowing in May should be stopped, because the seeds from the north are accustomed to July; mixed sowing should be stopped, because the purity of improved seeds has to be maintained.

Interviews with so-called contact farmers of the programme revealed a completely different perspective. One of them stated⁸ that IFAD's actual presence was very limited. In 2007, he had been sent to a three-day workshop, where modern cultivation methods were taught; then they gave him unfamiliar varieties of sesame and sorghum. It was already July at that time, so he skipped sorghum, which – from his perspective – is supposed to be sown with the first rains in May, sowing only sesame. He had a very low yield of sesame, so he returned silently to the varieties he knew. As he was not contacted again for two years, he left the programme for good. His conclusion: They did not teach us anything, the knowledge of our elders is a thousand times better.

Similar interactions existed in other credit systems, characterised by similar asymmetries. Lees and Brooks (1977) described farmers' inability to access the 'modern credit system' in Sudan:

Many farmers and farmer tenants do not actively seek or have ready access to sources of credit from collateral for loans, low risk-bearing capacity and managerial ability, inability to establish effective contact with lending institutions [...], lack of transport facilities to bring credit into remote areas, latent fear of other (modern) credit systems which

⁸ Interviews with the director of a primary school in Abol, 4 May 2009, 6 February 2010.

they have no familiarity with, and simple defence of traditional methods and value systems. A necessary solution to the problem of institutional credit [...] is close supervision of farmers by Agricultural Bank branches. (Lees and Brooks 1977: 94)

According to them, the 'traditional' *ṣayl* system was prevailing, an informal credit system widespread in northern Sudan. It involved moneylenders and 'an advance of seed against a future crop, a middleman service where the moneylender takes over the crop at market price less an amount approximating the interest rate on short-term advances, and an advance of money against future crops' (Lees and Brooks 1977: 95). The price given for crops after harvest was often far below the local market price at the time. This provided the lender with a high profit without falling under the concept of *ribhān* (interest), which is forbidden under Islamic law.

The argumentation unfolded considered this 'traditional' system as problematic, inefficient and costly, but also as inevitable until steps to increase net returns of farmers turn them into partners for the 'modern credit system'. During the 2000s, however, the formal banking sector, represented by the Agricultural Bank of Sudan (ABS), was practising the same kind of loan, although apparently in a formalised manner. The banking system distinguished between *salafīya*, which is an advance set off against the harvested crops or profit from selling, and *sallam*. The latter is a monetary credit, repaid after the harvest with crops, whose value depends on the market price at the time of the loan, not on the market price after harvest.

Such credit and repayment systems take advantage of the cash flow problems of farmers, who need inputs for cultivation, but can sell their crops only after harvest. Grain prices before sowing are very low, because last season's crops are still available in abundance. But in the months before harvest, crops become dear, prices rise, and banks and traders start to sell from the stores. After the harvest, prices sink again and farmers have difficulties selling enough to prevent cash flow problems in the following season.

Farmers find themselves entangled in economically boosted power structures, wherein the only difference between (informal) moneylenders and (formal) banks is the frankness of the contract and the

stronger link of the latter to enforcement mechanisms of the state.⁹ This 'state,' however, was present in the region for decades mainly as an oppressive force.

Uncertainty in the Nuba Mountains

Uncertainty seems to be a historical constant regarding cultivation practices in the Nuba Mountains, which have a long history as area of retreat for several populations subject to recurrent violent attacks (Rottenburg, Komey and Ille 2011). Bell (1938: 245) suggested that both land tenure and cultivation systems changed fundamentally with the invasion of the plains by 'Arabs', meaning pastoralist nomads that competed for land and also engaged in slave hunts. Private ownership developed to some degree, because of lack of access to good land, when the plains became too dangerous for cultivation. Nadel (1947: 16) claimed that '[n]ot until public security was finally established under British rule and raids by Arabs or neighbouring tribes had ceased, did the Nuba farmer feel safe out in the open, unprotected plain.'

Stevenson (1984: 44) mentioned these constant threats in the region and their impact on cultivation techniques:

The inhabitants of a whole village would have their cultivations side by side in hoeing in line. They would post look-outs and, on the alarm being given, would rush to their arms, forming a line of armed men to deal with their foes while the women and girls got away.

Rottenburg noted differentiated strategies of cultivation among the Lemwareng in central South Kordofan in the early 1980s, including combined cultivation of different crops to avoid early exhaustion of the soils and to manage time for different working processes in a balanced way. He added, nevertheless, that these strategies could only be decided upon according to agricultural criteria, if peace, i.e. physical security, prevailed (Rottenburg 1991: 70).

⁹ The inequalities empowered through the north Sudanese banking sector have been addressed by a 2009 initiative to establish a Nuba Mountains Bank based in Nairobi and Juba. Its link to South Sudan's governing party SPLM made it an additional bone of contention in the power struggles around the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan.

More layers of uncertainty were added with the introduction of large-scale mechanised farming in the region (Komey 2010: 43-49), legally bolstered by the Mechanised Farming Corporation Act (1968). Nominally, the Act favoured agricultural cooperatives of small-scale farmers, but the reality proved to be very different:

Following the introduction of the mechanized rain-fed farming schemes in the region, land grabbing has become a consistent government policy, resulting in the strengthening of the privileged ruling elites and their allied merchants, who have acquired land at the expense of rural communities. Set up in 1957 as a national bank, the Agricultural Bank of Sudan (ABS) aggravated the underdevelopment of local communities and further promoted the position of wealthy farmers in the region through its loans policies and specific conditions. It continued to concentrate its agricultural loans on wealthy investors who were more likely to repay their loans. The smaller farmers who were unable to repay loans were forced to rent their plots to merchants at a low rate, in order to keep up their loan repayments. (Komey 2010: 44)¹⁰

The evolving pattern was centralised distribution of land for schemes to investors without consultation of those who used and lived off this land; the same dynamics surrounded the process of oil exploration. The result was the large-scale, partly violent expropriation of farmers and the blockage of routes of nomadic pastoralists. Both led to more intense competition over resources on the remaining land, which rendered established forms of economic cooperation increasingly difficult. With the encroachment of the armed resistance from South Sudan into the region, the antagonised groups joined opposite sides of the large war parties, Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) of the

¹⁰ It is thus not surprising that the adherence to relatively secure subsistence crops is a recurrent observation of studies of agricultural development projects in the region. Ibrahim (1988: 150-155) described a 'hide-and-seek relationship' of the Nuba Mountains Agricultural Production Corporation (NMAPC) with tenants of the corporation's plots. While NMAPC favoured the mechanised cultivation of cotton according to the modernisation programme described above, farmers sowed cotton only on 'display fields' for the inspectors, while they kept sowing sorghum and other subsistence crops on other fields. A similar strategy had been described already in Briggs 1978.

Government of Sudan. The ideological enhancement of ethnic differences heated the conflicts even more, and the difference of 'Nuba' and 'Arab' appeared increasingly as what the contentions seemed to be about, not the systematic economic and political marginalisation, which was still ongoing.¹¹

What occurred in the small meeting in Kubang described at the beginning of this chapter is situated in this wider context.

Uncertainties of Seed Distribution in Kubang

In Kubang, like in other villages of the Nuba Mountains, uncertainty as a matter of life and death was felt during the war on an everyday basis. The practice of farming in the open plains had to be given up, when these plains were regularly patrolled by government forces, while only the mountains and the nearby stationing of SPLA forces brought some protection. At the same time, the presence of these armed forces with their demands for food, water, and timber heightened the effort of agricultural labour on smaller plots near the mountains.

The institutional manifestation of SPLM/A presence was as follows. In 1989, a major battle line of the civil war shifted to Kubang. SPLA soldiers established camps in the village, while the civilian community fled to the nearby hills. The supply of the soldiers was organised through so-called agents (sing. *mandūb*), who were appointed for each quarter of the emptied village; the direct contact person with the soldiers was the head agent, who also indicated and recorded civilians who could be recruited.

The SPLM/A completely structured contact with civilians. A 'revolutionary committee' (*lajna ṭawrīya*) functioned as umbrella organisation; all head agents of villages were under its control. Apart from that, a women's union and the 'civil security' were subordinated to the military security and therefore placed under SPLA command. Military command placed its orders for supplies with the revolutionary committee, whose head agents forwarded the orders to the subordinated agents. Whenever a civilian caused trouble, the civil security did the fact-finding and submitted a report to the higher ranks.

¹¹ Suliman 1998, Kadouf 2001, Manger 2001, and Komey 2005, amongst others, document these dynamics in the Nuba Mountains.

After the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002, these structures were not dismantled but continued in a different form. The report system in SPLM/A-controlled areas was delegated to so-called 'executive offices' (sing. *maktab tanfīdī*). Recruitment structures were continued, renewed and recorded through Disarmament-Demobilisation-Reintegration (DDR) programmes, because these often only documented members of armed groups, who instead of being helped with establishing a civilian life were above all reminded of the role they had played during the war (see Sureau in this volume on DDR programmes in South Sudan).¹²

In Kubang, the village head agent for the SPLM/A, the secretary of the revolutionary committee, the main informant of the DDR programme, as well as the contact of the INGO's seed bank programme was the same person, writing lists for everyone. While the first three institutions were basically there to take away things, the latter came under the auspices of gift-giving.

Concern Worldwide started its activities in Kubang in the frame of a relief programme, but it tried to introduce a principle of exchange from the beginning.¹³ For the construction of stores near Kubang, community members were asked to bring grass, timber, or bricks in exchange for direct payment of a specific amount of money. This system worked well; no time lag blurred the conditions of exchange. The secretary of the relief programme then became the secretary of a seed bank programme.

The local director of Concern Worldwide regarded the programme as a substitute for governmental seed banks, after the SPLM/A-controlled areas were cut off from northern Sudanese networks of distribution. Improved seeds were bought in Ardi Kan'ān, a village about 12 km from Kubang, where an airstrip provided a link to East

¹² This can be observed both for the SPLA and the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), which were mobilised from civilians by the northern Sudanese central government during the war. Although the peace agreement included the commitment to dismantle those structures, no side made the first step to initiate this process. On the contrary, a new shiny building for the PDF in Kadugli made clear quite early that the tendency was towards a renewal of war.

¹³ Concern Worldwide was started in Ireland, as Africa Concern, in reaction to the war in Biafra in 1968; two years later it brought emergency aid to East Pakistan as Concern. Emergency aid has remained one of its core activities in Sudan, with focus on West Darfur, but South Sudan is also an aid site (Concern Worldwide U.S. 2011). The main programmes in the Nuba Mountains were watershed management and seed banks, starting in the 1980s.

Africa, or in Nairobi. Although these seeds were tested on experimental fields in Kummo, close to Kubang, the new varieties with shorter ripening periods were not easily accepted by farmers. Those who gave the seeds a try mostly failed to comply with the conditions of the loan.

Credit was given in *malwa*¹⁴ and combined with an interest rate of up to 50 per cent. For example, for taking four *malwa* of sorghum,¹⁵ six *malwa* would have to be returned after the harvest. A committee of ten community members was formed to monitor the process. After the first harvest a moderate percentage of seeds given back encouraged proceeding with the programme to develop more commitment. The second year brought both fewer borrowers and even less repayment; for the third year, the records show only 13 of 68 borrowers to have given back anything.

This crisis, which led to the initially described meeting, was already disputed before by the secretary of Concern Worldwide's seed bank programme and his son, who was also director of the implementing NRRDO. The latter interpreted the situation in terms of a formal contract. Accordingly, he proposed to inform the police to enforce either repayment or punishment. His father interpreted the situation in terms of personal relations and reciprocity. He refused to take this step, which would lead to bad feelings, which nobody wants, especially he, having grown old during the war and weary of excitements. Therefore he left the negotiation, whose tensions had become too much to continue without unacceptable repercussions, and therewith the seed bank programme ended in Kubang.

Conclusion

The situation described in the beginning of the chapter, regarding a seed bank programme in the village of Kubang in Nuba Mountains /South Kordofan, Sudan, goes back to a basic contradiction: Not everybody agreed what is at stake. The involved parties entered into a contractual relationship with very different assumptions and motivations.

¹⁴ A *malwa* is a more or less standardised unit based on the volume of a cylinder-shaped can (diameter of 17 centimetres and height of 17 centimetres; volume of 3.86 litres). One *malwa* equals about 3.5 kilograms of sorghum.

¹⁵ Sorghum is a millet species and the main subsistence crop for the farmers of this region.

Several paradoxes pervaded the situation. The certainty of predictions claimed by distributors of seeds was initially accepted, because it was presented by a presumably powerful giving force. The demand for a 'recompensation,' however, discredited the presumption of a benevolent power and thus the acceptance of its conditions of distribution. Not only that, but the low yields violated the implicit contractual promise coming with the offer of 'improved' seeds.

The contract was thus a risk for both sides, although for different reasons. Just as the governmental seed banks, Concern Worldwide was connected to a commercially operating network, which has to protect its returns and revenues. Based on scientific authority, its operators claimed to provide a good product, for which they demanded to be repaid with an equivalent. The developmental coat of the programme protected non-compliance from direct repercussions, but highlighted at the same time the 'under-development' of the borrowers. The latter, however, were confronted with seeds developed for a different environment and with unclear characteristics, in spite of their acclaimed superiority, and 'repaid' the treacherous lender by non-compliance with the contract.

Moreover, surrounded by 'big men' and their technologies of extraversion,¹⁶ the negotiation of intervention could not easily take place in the sense of formal credit as was presumed by the programme. The farmers entered into agreements in frame of survival strategies, wherein the seeds can be seen as a gift, as a sign of generosity of 'big men,' of major risk takers. NGOs entered into the agreements in the frame of their involvement in a field of economic cooperation, which is fed by an interplay of the extension of markets, rationalisation as modernisation, and 'distant suffering' (Boltanski 1999).

This is of course just one of the possible interpretations. In fact, rules of the formal banking sector were circulating among some of the involved actors as elements of an on-going knowledge production. Accordingly, the critique of the demanded repayment can also be understood as leverage to access development aid as 'prey' (Beck 1990).

¹⁶ Bayart (1993) discussed this under the term 'politics of the belly,' especially in the chapter 'The Unequal State: 'Little Men' and 'Big Men.' Popular imagery coined the name *karš al-fil*, belly of the elephant, for the capital Khartoum. While this refers mostly to the melting pot and a sense of blurred identities, it also implies a place where everybody comes to catch at least the crumbs falling from the big pie sliced there.

In any case, the ambiguity of the positions is not to be underestimated, as each party is at least partially aware of the others' positions. The point is that the negotiation was done in terms, which claim 'generosity' and 'formal contract' as respective bases of interaction. There is no need to decide, which of the possible approaches led to the question. Rather, the inevitable net of paradoxes is relevant here, the interactions into which the programme was woven, and how those involved in it dealt with the paradoxes, until the interaction ceased to be continued. In this sense, 'morality' was a common feature, although with very different 'levers': 'we are unequal and should be treated differently' met 'they are unequal, but should be the same.'

Those farmers in doubt were proven right. In June 2011 the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan became a major battleground once again, and relief became the type of intervention. External partners turned once again from supporting development projects to financing and organising relief efforts. Accordingly, the simplified understanding of 'beneficiaries' being ignorant of formal structures and their rules is actually ignorant of people's experience of being in a situation where they have to get what they can to survive. Subsistence is here not a voluntary economic strategy, but what the 'economic actors' are repeatedly reduced to by cycles of destruction, relief, embryonic institution-building, and destruction. The kind of social relations presumed by development programmes, such as the seed bank programme discussed here, have not had enough time and social space to unfold. Voluntary compliance with contracts as prospected 'product' of intervention is bombed away and 'big men', givers and takers, continue to rule the field.

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Institutionalisation and Regulation of Medical Kits in an Emergency Situation in the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan¹

Mariam Sharif

Medical kits are mobile repositories designed to deliver free medicine and medical equipment for populations in acute, temporary emergency situations. The functions of such medical kits changed in the context of an enduring state of emergency in South Kordofan. From being means or tools for the temporary supply of medicine in war and post-war situations, medical kits turned into the main medical supply system. As they were institutionalised, they came to organise health services. That medical kits took on such a central role relates to the political and economic crises in a region marked by prolonged war. Fighting had long forestalled the institutionalisation of more permanent health infrastructures, leading to a lack of health services also in the post-war situation – both quantitatively and qualitatively. Medical kits strengthened infrastructural conditions, provided material for medical education and were crucial sources of medical supply.

I track the processes through which the functions of medical kits changed, functions which give meaning to medical kits in the permanent emergency in South Kordofan. This chapter will focus on the institutionalisation of medical kits in South Kordofan, that is, the process through which meanings were established in relation to them and solidified in society. I track the processes through which the functions of medical kits changed, functions which give meaning to medical kits in the permanent emergency in South Kordofan. I assert that the peculiar institutionalisation of these kits in a setting of crisis led to a disparity between intentional efforts at regulating the use of medical kits and their actual usage.

¹ This chapter forms part of my Master thesis, 'A study of interaction between health institutions in knowledge and medical practices in Heiban (Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan, Sudan)', Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Khartoum.

The reconfiguration of medical kits is traced through two periods of time: the historical background of medical drug supply during the war (1987-2005), when UNICEF and Doctors without Borders (MSF) introduced medical kits; and after the peace agreement was signed in 2005 until May 2011.

Empirical data was collected during fieldwork from October-December 2010 and March-May 2011. The methodology was participant observation during voluntary work in a health centre in Heiban, a rural town in South Kordofan. Documents, such as reports from the Secretariat of Health, including from its medicines supply section for the year 2010, were also consulted. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with nurses and pharmaceutical assistants as well as governmental employees in the Ministry of Health.

General Background

War in South Kordofan / Nuba Mountains started between the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and the Sudanese government in 1987. It continued until a ceasefire agreement was signed in 2002. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) followed in 2005. War resumed in June 2011. This political instability in the region influenced the provision of health services, leading to a chronic lack of such services and particularly of medicine and medical supplies. For example, Guma Kunda Komey notes concerning the Nuba Mountains and regional disparities in the national development of the Sudan:

No significant improvements were made neither in the direction of qualitative and quantitative improvement of the health facilities and medical manpower neither in aggregate terms, nor in the direction of expending equitable health services into peripheral regions. (Komey 2005: 173)

Since the CPA was signed in 2005 until the war reignited in 2011, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A) tried to construct and reconstruct an integrated administrative system. The two institutions administering health services were the Federal Ministry of Health, responsible for health in the NCP-controlled areas, and the Secretariat of Health for

SPLM/A-controlled areas. There were some efforts at integrating these two institutions and their respective administrative systems. However, each conflict party was interested in maintaining control of institutions in the area under its control. A Heiban administrative officer explains the administrative challenges to the provisioning of health services: 'it is peace time but no security with the partner.'²

In her study on chronic conflict and livelihood in Heiban, Jamila Hassan (2005) provides further insights into the health situation in South Kordofan. She shows that the clinic in Heiban locality was rehabilitated by the government after the CPA as a rural hospital, but that the supply with staff and medicine was neither integrated into the national health system, nor supported by NGOs or local suppliers of medical drugs. The demand for medical services in South Kordofan could not be met, confirming the chronic lack of health services and their overall low quality (Hassan 2005: 89). It was in this situation of acute supply gaps and the lack of integration into national health infrastructures that medical kits came to assume an important role in South Kordofan.

Contents of Medical Kits and Contexts of Their Use

In this section I discuss the purposes for which medical kits were designed before their introduction to South Kordofan and the changes in their use after their arrival.

In his text 'Vital Mobility and the Humanitarian Kit,' Peter Redfield (2008) discusses the development and limitations of humanitarian kits. He mentions how the Red Cross designed first aid kits in the early twentieth century. In his view such a kit:

is a mobile repository of potentiality useful implements. Forms of it feature in the long history of military equipment and logistics, as well as craft production. Humble medical versions are common features of private and public, stored in small boxes found in closets, automobiles, aircraft, schools, and many other nonmedical settings in anticipation of minor emergencies. (Redfield 2008: 148)

² Interview with M., male, 55, administrative officer for Heiban locality in 2010, Heiban, 30 November 2010.

An MSF catalogue also defines a medical kit as a repository: 'A kit contains the whole of the needed equipment for filling a given function. Intended for emergency contexts, it is ready to be delivered within a very short time frame' (from the 2003 English edition of the MSF catalogue, cited in Redfield 2008: 157). One could therefore argue that medical kits through their design and contents confirm an order of emergency. Medical kits were designed to be used to dispense the most urgent medical supplies during war. They were distributed in South Kordofan since 1995 until the escalation of the second war in June 2011. Their supply was supported by various NGOs, for example, MSF, Cap Anamur (German Emergency Doctors / GED), UNICEF, and USAID.

The UNICEF Nairobi branch had brought the first humanitarian aid kit to the SPLM/A-dominated area of South Kordofan in 1995, when leprosy and diarrhoea were rampant. In the beginning medical kits were thus used to address specific health grievances, but both their content and their functions transformed as the conflict in South Kordofan developed. Soon medical kits – initially an emergency measure – were used to support the regular infrastructure of clinics and health centres. The most frequent items transferred to the war zone in medical kits in 1995-1997 were check-up beds and pieces of medical equipment, such as scissors, stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers (blood pressure meter), surgery equipment, medical cotton, gloves, gauze and boxes of quinine, which is medicine for malaria.³

In 2010-2011 during peace time, the kits contained mainly medical drugs instead of medical equipment. For example, 1,000 tablets of multivitamins, 1,000 tablets of metronidazole,⁴ gentian violet,⁵ amoxicillin syrup,⁶ ampiclox for pneumonia,⁷ paracetamol,⁸ yamidine

³ Interview with R., a 45-year-old officer and nurse in the SPLM/A, Heiban, 13 April 2011; he worked in medical supply during war (1989-1995).

⁴ Metronidazole is used to treat a wide variety of infections, including those in the abdomen, bones, joints, nervous system, respiratory tract, and skin, as well as vaginal and intestinal infections.

⁵ Gentian violet is an antifungal used to treat some types of fungus infections inside the mouth.

⁶ Amoxicillin is an antibiotic from the penicillin group. It is for treating infections, for example, chest infections and gonorrhoea (a sexually transmitted infection).

⁷ Ampiclox is an antibiotic containing ampicillin and cloxacillin, a penicillin antibiotic combination.

⁸ Paracetamol is used against headaches and other minor aches and pains.

(povidone iodine),⁹ and laboratory solutions. Thus, the context – war or peace – affected the composition of medical kits. Contents changed dynamically in relation to situational needs.

The content of medical kits also affected therapeutic and medical practices of health practitioners in a variety of ways. Two health workers I interviewed in 2011, who had gained experience with medical kits in different situations, offer interesting insights. One physician from Khartoum, who had just arrived to work in Abu Gebeiha¹⁰ hospital and whom I met in Kadugli¹¹ in 2011, stated that ‘a medical kit is a small box or bag. It contains first aid tools and medicines for minor emergencies.’¹² Another definition stems from a nurse who was working in Kauda¹³ during and after the war in the Nuba Mountains until 2011. He had a different understanding of what medical kits are, namely ‘big strong carton boxes containing equipment and medicines. [A medical kit] is distributed based on the quota for each health unit. It is one of the medicine supply systems with which international organisations operate.’¹⁴

These two different understandings of medical kits underscore the intimate relationship between the state of emergency (minor-major) and the size and content of the kit. In the first case, medical kits function as small repositories of first aid drugs and medical equipment. In the second case, medical kits are used as a system of medical supply. Still, both practitioners understand medical kits instrumentally as a mobile means and repository to deliver medicine and medical equipment for different emergencies, such as first aid kits for small injuries or burns, and humanitarian aid kits for epidemics or surgery.

Medical kits are here discussed as ways of providing and improving health services in emergency situations. In the following I show in greater detail how the functions of medical kits changed with the in-

⁹ Yamidine is used as disinfectant wipes in the form of alcohol pads containing povidone-iodine solution as antiseptic.

¹⁰ Abu Gebeiha is a city and a locality in the east of South Kordofan.

¹¹ Kadugli is the capital city of South Kordofan state, as well as a locality, situated in the centre of the state.

¹² Interview with O., male, 45, physician of internal medicine, Kadugli, 6 May 2011.

¹³ Kauda is a rural town east of Kadugli, which was long the military and administrative centre of the SPLM/A in the Nuba Mountains.

¹⁴ Interview with S., male, 38, nurse in charge of medical drug supply in the Secretariat of Health, Kauda, 14 April 2011.

tensity of conflict. I argue that medical kits did not just change their material contents, but also altered the infrastructural conditions and knowledge embedded in and associated with them as a situation of emergency became the dominant social order.

Medical Kits in Wartime

In the midst of the war period, between 1987 and 1995, people struggled for survival in the SPLM/A-controlled area, when the supply of drugs and medical equipment faltered. Health services were managed through the military hierarchy. Information about diseases and available medicines flowed from distributed brigades to the head of the zone. This hierarchical organisation of military health services by the military is related to the absence of humanitarian aid. The Sudanese government blocked the activities of UN and other agencies in the area. In 1991, the Secretariat of Health was placed under military supervision and is still responsible for health education and medical provision in SPLM/A-controlled areas today.

In this emergency situation, an organisation was established and registered in Nairobi in 1993 to attract regional and international funds from donor organisations for humanitarian aid. It was called Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Support (NRRDS), later Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (NRRDO). This organisation played a major role in mediating health services. A member in the Secretariat of Health coordinated health aid between the NRRDO headquarters in Nairobi and needs in the Nuba Mountains. He also facilitated logistical concerns.

In 1995 UNICEF sent a medical doctor and an assistant equipped with medical kits into the region. These first medical kits contained oral rehydration salts, anti-diarrhoea drugs, multivitamins, and drugs for the treatment of leprosy. The medical staff provided local health workers with a one-week workshop on the control of leprosy and diarrhoea. The workshop was held near Tagali's airport under the shadow of a tree. Tagali, a city located in the east of South Kordofan about 80 km north of Abu Gebeiha, is a secure place and easy for UNICEF workers to travel back to Nairobi, in view of the widespread unavailability of transportation in the Nuba Mountains. Health wor-

kers had to carry the supplied medical kits from Tagali airport to their respective health centres on foot.

In 1997 Doctors without Borders Holland (MSF) supported health services on several levels, especially medical education, and began to include more infrastructural elements in their medical kits. Both UNICEF and MSF Holland trained local health workers in workshops concerning the tools and medicines in the medical kits as well as how to respond to epidemic diseases in the area.¹⁵

Gradually this led to a situation in which health services were managed cooperatively by the military and NGOs. The information circle was extended to include more civil actors. That the NRRDO-member in the Secretariat of Health was coordinating the aid efforts, strengthened the ties between health and aid workers. In monthly meetings with the Secretariat of Health, reports were shared with organisations, such as MSF and German doctors, the Open Doors Church Organisation, then UNICEF in 1999, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in 2002, and then Save the Children USA in 2002 and the Diocese of El-Obeid in 2004.

Where no infrastructure was in place to keep drugs and vaccines cool, solar cells were delivered along with medical kits to provide power for cooling. The contents of medical kits reflect assumptions about what medicines and medical equipments are needed and how they should be used. Medical kits thus began to figure not only as tools for treatment but also as sources of information, knowledge and energy. The medical kit as a means of emergency aid was gradually re-appropriated as a main source of information and access to energy.

Medical Kits in Peace Time

In April 2011, I visited the medicines supply section of the Secretariat of Health in Kauda. This section is located in a big concrete building divided into two rooms. The smaller one is the office, the bigger one is the medicine store.

Inside the medicine store I noticed differently-sized boxes, which workers carried to a car of the Norwegian Church Aid. I was informed that the boxes were one-month consignments for the Heiban health

¹⁵ Interview with A., male, 75 years, director of Ḥakīma Yaʿqūb School (1989-2006), working as medical assistant since 1981, Heiban, 4 December 2010.

centre and Longorou health units, according to the quota. These boxes were not medical kits. But how to discern the difference? The difference between boxes and medical kits concerns size, contents and design. Medical kits are larger; they contain different things and are meant to last for a longer time period. They also are also marked with organisational labels, identifying them as medical kits belonging to a certain organisation and implicitly abiding by their regulations concerning medicine supply; other medicine boxes are smaller and contain only one kind of drug. They are called 'medicine from the ministry' and are labelled by the company that produced them.

Later I interviewed the administrator of health units in Heiban locality.¹⁶ He informed me about the establishment of another supply system: 'The medicine supply applied by the Ministry of Health is a Revolving Drugs Fund. In SPLM/A-controlled areas, it was started in 2009.' This capital-oriented programme is facilitated by the Ministry of Health. The RDF has a pricing strategy for health services that is equivalent to the actual cost of the drug purchase plus the operating costs. Fees differ depending on the type of drugs. The first capital investment was made by Save the Children in 1989, to initiate the project in 60 health centres; then the project was extended to the majority of public facilities in Khartoum state and then to all Sudanese states (Ali 2000).

However, as SPLM/A-controlled areas are not or only insufficiently integrated into this governmental health supply system, drug supplies from the RDF system are irregular and slow. Many organisations thus continue to offer medicine support through medical kits to cover the needs of these areas.

The enduring use of medical kits indicates the persistent situation of emergency even after the peace agreement. The Sudanese government and the SPLM/A, which shared power and resources in South Kordofan, faced delays in institutional integration. Thus, the SPLM/A Secretariat of Health implemented a memorandum of understanding with international organisations. Its main aim was to ensure the continuity of organisations working to support health services in the region until stability could be reached. The SPLM/A as the second partner in the government (after the National Congress Party) should have facilitated the registration of international organisations in the

¹⁶ Interview with M., male, 33, born in Heiban, training and work as nurse in Heiban locality, Heiban, 25 November 2010.

Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). However, the coordination between the Secretariat of Health and NGOs was managed directly by the Secretariat of Health. NRRDO, once a mediating body, became one of the organisations registered officially in HAC. All these arrangements were made to cope with the insecure situation and the lack of trust in the partnership between the government and the SPLM/A.

On 4 March 2009, 13 organisations were expelled from Sudan, related to the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of the Sudanese president. Three of the organisations were effectively working in South Kordofan, namely MSF, Save the Children USA and Save the Children UK. This move affected the affordability of medical care in general and that of medical supplies in particular. The government did not take the responsibility towards its own people seriously, failing to fill gaps between needs for health services and their actual availability.

Doors were opened for private drug stores to meet the medicine demand in the local market. A new labour market for health workers also emerged. However, the provision of medicines for large populations remained unstable. Medical kits were not just used to fill supply gaps but also to cover the expenses of health centres. For example, a pharmacy assistant at Heiban Health Centre said in an interview:¹⁷

We give the medicine at a symbolic (nominal) price of 1,000 Sudanese dinars (SDD) [about 0.27 Euros] only, and if the patient needs more than one medicine we give him or her all what he or she needs for 2,000 SDD. This price is the monthly salary of those who work here, who did not integrate in the government system, and they are working as volunteers to cover needs of the many areas not just Heiban.

To sum up, medical kits were designed by international organisations as means of aid in emergencies. In South Kordofan, medical kits were replies to emergencies during the war. In these life threatening circumstances, medicines were provided free of charge. Meanwhile medical kits, the once 'free' humanitarian donations, were commodified. This indicated another crisis, namely the deadlock resulting from the failure of both government and the SPLM/A to provide adequate health services for the population.

¹⁷ Interview with T., male, 54 years, assistant in pharmacy of Heiban health centre, Heiban, 6 November 2010.

In South Kordofan medical kits as emergency relief turned into the only functioning medical supply system. People found new ways to use them, to interact with those defining 'needs' and therewith their contents, and to adapt working conditions to changing socio-political contexts. Medical kits as tangible, material responses to emergencies enable and simultaneously constraint certain options. They do display some coercive properties. If local health practitioners do not engage with medical kits, they can be excluded from medicine supply, knowledge, infrastructure and financial support. The public and private sectors compete to provide medicine supplies and make use of medical kits. Medical kits themselves reflect dynamic relations in a variety of emergency situations.

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‘Popular Consultation’ as a Mechanism for Peaceful Social Order in the Nuba Mountains / South Kordofan?

Guma Kunda Komey

Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, a common conviction was that the underlying root causes of Sudan’s protracted civil wars had been accurately diagnosed, comprehensively negotiated, and finally transformed into a set of modalities that would allow for the establishment of nonviolent social orders. The agreement was thus presented as a final settlement for Sudan’s social, economic and political problems. The CPA detailed explicit institutional regulating mechanisms to lead Sudan step by step from a situation of perpetual turbulence to a stabilised peaceful state. Achieving an attractive unity, a democratic transformation, as well as an equitable distribution and sharing of power and wealth among different regions and people of Sudan were some of the fundamental tenets enshrined in the agreement.

Already at the end of the transitional period (2005-2011), however, only separation, not unity, appeared attractive. Democratic transformation was hardly achieved; rather pre-CPA institutional forms were further consolidated. And socio-political tensions at different levels were stirred up until they erupted into large-scale violent conflicts. The key question is why the intended outcomes were not achieved and until today appear unachievable. The proposition here is that the failure to restore lasting and peaceful social order in Sudan is, to a large extent, related to the way the CPA was engineered; some key issues, including the two contested regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, were compromised or sidelined in the agreement.

Taking South Kordofan state as a unit of analysis, this chapter analyses details and trajectories of the peace negotiation and its subsequent implementation in the region. The focus is on the Protocol on ‘The Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States’ (hereafter: protocol).

This protocol was intended to restore peace and social order by stipulating a set of modalities and principles as a basis for political solutions to the conflict in these two war-torn regions. In this protocol, ‘popular consultation’ is a key mechanism and a political right to be exercised by the people of each region to assess the CPA’s effectiveness in addressing their political, economic, social and administrative demands.¹

An important question is how and by whom the concept of popular consultation was introduced and incorporated into the agreement. More importantly, how the protocol in general and popular consultation in particular have been perceived, interpreted and dealt with by the involved actors during peace negotiations and implementation processes. In view of the renewed outbreak of violent conflict in the region at the end of the transitional period (Rottenburg, Komey and Ille 2011), a burning question is why the attempted implementation of the protocol failed to establish the intended peaceful social order in the region? In light of these questions, the task of the study is three-fold. First, it traces peace negotiation discourses with a focus on the protocol of the two contested regions and people’s responses. Second, it discusses the concept of popular consultation and its practices with reference to the most recent international experiences. Finally, the study argues that the agreement contains an ambiguous notion of popular consultation and analyses the introduction of such ambiguities into the protocol, its different interpretations, and its political consequences in the region.

The Protocol of the Two Areas: Negotiations and Salient Features

The civil war started in southern Sudan in 1983 and extended to northern Sudan via the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile in the mid 1980s. Some people in these two regions developed a sense of political destiny with South Sudan despite their political location in the north. Thus, they were progressively integrated into the ‘New Sudan’ political scheme advanced by the late Dr. John Garang, the leader of the Sudan

¹ See Protocol on ‘The Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States’ of 26 May 2004, page 4, points 3.1-3.3. <http://www.issafrika.org/AF/profiles/Sudan/protnilemay04.pdf>, accessed 4 August 2014.

People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (Khalid 1987; Kameir 2006; Komey 2010a, 2010b; Johnson 2011). This military and political development transformed the 'problem of southern Sudan' into the 'problem of Sudan'. As a result, the north-south divide became irrelevant in the eyes of people in the SPLM/A-controlled areas of these two regions, particularly the activist elites.

During peace negotiations since the 1990s between the two warring parties, the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM/A, it was evident that the three contested areas including Abyei were the most contentious issues. Initially, the GoS rejected their inclusion in any negotiating agenda on the grounds that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)² mandate was confined to the problem of 'southern Sudan'. At the same time, the SPLM/A demanded the inclusion of the three areas together with the south as one geopolitical and military block. In the SPLM/A's view, their armed struggle together with the people of the three areas implied one political destiny. In this respect, Deng Alor Kuol, a SPLM/A senior negotiator, and prominent SPLM/A leader from Abyei, insisted:

Besides being part of a marginalized fighting Sudan, the people of these areas live in one contentious territory with South Sudan and are not scattered and dotted all over the Sudan. This aspect makes them a natural and geographical part and parcel of the Southern Sudan and components of the New Sudan. Hence they have the legitimacy to exercise the right of self-determination together or separately with the people of Southern Sudan. (Kuol in Komey 2010a: 125)

At some stage in the peace negotiations, the SPLM/A buckled under pressure, calling for a 'separate but parallel' proposal for self-determination for the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile areas. The SPLM/A leaders from the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile, namely Yussuf Kuwa Mekki and Malik Agar, informed the GoS delegation and the IGAD mediators that their two regions were indeed part of the south

² The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) superseded in 1996 the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), established in 1986 in reaction to recurring droughts in the region. Currently, it consists of eight member states: Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti and Kenya as founding members; Eritrea and South Sudan were as admitted members in 1993 and 2011, respectively.

and should the GoS reject their position, the two areas would remain outside a settlement and continue to fight for their rights. Yusuf Kuwa Mekki insisted that in the case that the people of southern Sudan opted for separation, in the exercise of their right to self-determination, the Nuba should have the following three options (Komey 2010c: 127):

- Choose to be part of southern Sudan state;
- Choose to be part of the northern Sudan state; or
- Choose to have an independent state.

Due to persistent pressure from the international, regional and local actors of both parties, a breakthrough was made when the three contested areas were included in a separate track in the last stage of peace negotiations and, as a consequence, were included in the CPA (Komey 2010a; Johnson 2011).

As a part of the CPA, the Protocol on ‘The Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States’, signed on 26 May 2004, provides two sets of sociocultural, economic and politico-administrative arrangements to normalise the situation during the transitional period and beyond.

The first set includes, among others, (i) socio-political accommodation through power- and wealth-sharing, (ii) integration of civil service, police and judiciary, (iii) creation of an integrated military force formed out of SPLM/A and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), (iv) achieving social reconciliation among different ethnic groups in the two regions, (v) setting up an institutional framework to settle land rights disputes, and (vi) assisting internally displaced persons (IDPs) in returning to their homelands. These arrangements were formulated as preconditions for socio-political stability, conditions that must prevail before the conduct of state elections. Popular consultation was devised as a subsequent and final step in resolving conflicts in the two regions. In reality, however, hardly any of these fundamental arrangements were met, resulting in a tense situation between the state and local communities, as well as between different communities, especially in South Kordofan (Komey 2009, 2010a-d; Rottenburg, Komey and Ille 2011).

The second set of arrangements includes a number of specific political steps organised in a logical sequence and bound to a specified timing, all aiming at a final resolution of the conflicts. This set of steps starts with the population census as a prerequisite for elections, while the election is a prerequisite for the exercise of popular consultation, the final step stipulated. All these arrangements were delayed in the region with popular consultation rescheduled to take place in 2011 instead of 2010. These processes were initially planned, however, so their implementation would finish prior to conducting the referendum in South Sudan. This sequence was a crucial part of the CPA. The SPLM/A as partner in the CPA could have participated in implementing the arrangements of the protocol before the south determined its destiny through the referendum. The following are some of the protocol's main aspects which were enshrined in the State Interim Constitution of 2006:

1. The structures of the state government, legislature, and the judiciary;
2. South Kordofan State shares two per cent in the oil produced in its land;
3. Both states share half of the 75 per cent of the total fund designated to the war-affected areas;
4. Power-sharing in the two states during the interim period was allocated 55 and 45 per cent to the NCP and the SPLM respectively;
5. The right to 'popular consultation' is to be exercised by the people of both regions to assess the effectiveness of the Protocol in redressing their multiple grievances; and
6. A part of the SPLM/A forces are to participate in security arrangements in the two areas through the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs).

Shortly after signing the CPA in 2005, however, a sizeable number of people in the Nuba Mountains, through different communal conferences, held the view that the fundamental questions of identity, territory and political destiny had not been satisfactorily dealt with in

the CPA (Komey 2010a, 2010b; Gluck 2010).³ In their views, the following were the main shortcomings in the CPA:

- The CPA denied the people of the two regions the right to self-determination which was reduced to an inferior and ambiguous political exercise of 'Popular Consultation';
- The CPA suppressed the right to compensation of local communities affected by the expansion of mechanised farming and of the oil industry on their traditional livelihood bases;
- The CPA ignored the demand to address basic issues of socio-cultural emancipation and self-determined identity, which were systematically subdued under successive central governments; and
- The CPA was silent with regard to the atrocities and gross human rights violations committed by the GoS during the war (Komey 2010a, 2010b).

At a later stage, an evaluation of the CPA's performance showed that substantial parts of the CPA, especially those directly related to the two areas, either remained unimplemented or delayed beyond their time frame (Komey 2010a, 2010b). Most of the delays were not simply technical problems or adjustments, but part of political manoeuvres that jeopardised the implementation of some crucial aspects of the CPA. The delay is, to a large degree, ascribed not only to a lack of political will by the involved parties but also to the way the CPA was engineered.

Hilde F. Johnson⁴ (2011) reveals how the agreement was drafted and how international mediators exercised excessive pressure on Dr. Garang and the leaders of the two regions to give up their original negotiating position on these areas. It was about sacrificing the two

³ The author followed, through participant observation, numerous Nuba tribal conferences, including Heiban-Abol Third Conference in Kubang, 13-16 April 2005; Leira Third Conference in Hagar Bago, 16-18 April 2005; Irral Payam Conference in Shuwai, 21-22 April 2005; Korongo-Messakin Tribes Conference in Farandella, Buram County, 29 May - 1 June 2005; First Traditional Leaders Conference, 17-22 July 2005; All Keiga Second Conference, Keiga Tummero, 12-14 April 2006; and Temein Third Conference, 13-18 April 2007.

⁴ Hilde F. Johnson served as Norwegian Development Minister (1997-2000 and 2001-2005). She played a pivotal role in brokering the CPA for Sudan. She then served as Head of the United Nation Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (2011-2014).

regions for the sake of the whole agreement. In Johnson's (2011: 141) words:

The biggest problem was the SPLM/A. Garang would not budge. I assumed that he was under pressure from his people in the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile. We agreed that I would meet Garang alone, and in a separate room I told him that it was time for him to back down. Finally, he conceded. I went to Ali Osman⁵ with the news; stressed the need for no changes in the text. [...] The protocols on power sharing and the three areas were finally signed at 10 p.m.

Apparently, the leaders of the two regions gave up their negotiating position of demanding self-determination essentially due to pressure and persuasion from international mediators. The mediators were convinced of 'the impossibility of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile exercising self-determination by referendum along the same line as the South as a whole. It was quite clear that it would not "fly" with Khartoum' (Johnson 2011: 131). Johnson acknowledges her leading role in persuading leaders of the two regions to give up their demand for self-determination and to accept popular consultation instead. Regrettably, evidence shows that pressure and persuasion was counter-productive to the extent that Johnson reflects upon her role: 'I was later to regret deeply my role in persuading Abd al-Aziz⁶ and Malik' (Johnson 2011: 132). This testimony confirms that the two areas were, in fact, nothing more than objects of bargaining between the negotiating parties and the mediators. The final outcome was a protocol with many loopholes in contents and vagueness in its key mechanisms, particularly the notion of 'popular consultation' which will be detailed in the following discussion.

⁵ Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, a member of the National Congress Party, was the first vice president of Sudan at that time.

⁶ Abd al-Aziz al-Hilu was commander of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in South Kordofan. After the separation of South Sudan in 2011, he became the chief commander of the Sudan People's Liberation Army – North.

Popular Consultation: Definition and International Experiences

The political definition of the word 'popular' is central in understanding the term 'popular consultation'. The Oxford Dictionary of English of 2003 defines 'popular political activity' as 'carried on by the people as a whole rather than restricted to politicians or political parties.' Practically, different types of political exercises can be considered popular consultations, including (i) plebiscite decisions about political controversies, (ii) elections, with ballots, governed by the Constitution and statutes that define the electoral system, and (iii) referendum decisions about a specific proposal. The term popular consultation can thus imply various things. Nonetheless, all the notions share one key criterion. Popular consultation is exercised directly by all the people, and not indirectly through their political representatives or by part of the people. Thus, depending on the circumstances, in an ideal case a relevant type of popular consultation is explicitly chosen, then qualified by an unambiguous definition to avoid misinterpretation. Popular consultation is about resolving a key dispute related to peoples' political choice or interest.

Representations of public opinion through popular consultations were practised, for example, in Indonesia and Kenya. In Indonesia the exercise of popular consultation led to the independence of East Timor in 1999 (Martin 2000) and regional autonomy in the case of Aceh in 2005 (Bertrand 2004; Aspinall 2005). In Kenya, it was exercised by the Kenyan people nationwide in passing the National Constitution through a referendum that paved the way for democratic transformation in 2010. Direct participation of people in making decisions is a defining feature of popular consultation as the cases of Indonesia and Kenya illustrate. Popular consultation is about direct participation of people in decision-making with regard to their desired political choices.

These international experiences also reveal that popular consultations do not have a prescriptive model to follow and are no means to achieve specific ends. For example, in the East Timor case, popular consultation meant a referendum. It was 'a direct, secret ballot' (Martin 2000: 137) for all eligible voters under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNMET). For that purpose, a precise and simple description of the intended type of popular

consultation was explicitly expressed in East Timor. Its modality was practically operational with no room for misinterpretation. Towards that end, the following was agreed upon and inserted in the pre-referendum agreement between the parties in dispute

‘Do you accept the proposed special autonomy: ACCEPT for East Timor within the United States of the Republic of Indonesia?’

OR

‘Do you reject the proposed special autonomy: REJECT for East Timor, leading to East Timor’s separation from Indonesia?’⁷

These simple and direct questions to voters were integrated into the agreement to avoid any controversy, misinterpretation or even manipulation by the rivals: the Government of Indonesia and the National Council of East Timor Resistance. The simplicity and clarity with which the desired political process in East Timor was described and implemented enabled the mechanism of popular consultation to solve a highly contested issue in a political setting mounting with rivalry and mistrust between the competing actors. Unlike the East Timor case, popular consultation in Sudan was vaguely defined with many loopholes that left too much room for controversy.

Sudan's Popular Consultation: Origin, Ambiguity and Viability

To resolve the conflict between north and south, the political destiny of South Kordofan and Blue Nile was compromised. Instead of a referendum for self-determination, the protocol presumed the two states would remain in north Sudan in the event of the south’s secession. But it provided for people in the two states to either adopt the CPA as the final settlement for their conflicts or renegotiate the CPA to remedy any shortcomings and reach a final settlement. The process of negotiating the CPA between parliamentary representatives of the two regions and the central government was entrusted to the

⁷ From the ‘Agreement Regarding the Modalities for the Popular Consultation of the East Timorese Through a Direct Ballot’ of 5 May 1999. <http://etan.org/etun/modaliti.htm>, accessed 4 August 2014.

political mechanism labelled ‘popular consultation’. This mechanism, however, turned out to be very ambiguous and therefore controversial when it came to its implementation with an aim of resolving the contested and complex issues in the region. The origin of this ambiguity is traceable to the way popular consultation was conceived and subsequently introduced into the CPA during negotiations.

The term ‘popular consultation’ was introduced during peace negotiations both by Nicholas Fink Haysom,⁸ with experience of East Timor, and Hilde Johnson, one of the key mediators in Sudan’s peace process. They intentionally introduced an ambiguous version of popular consultation as indirect participation of people through parliamentary authority as an alternative to direct consultation through referendum or direct ballot processes (Johnson 2011: 114). Although they made reference to East Timor’s experience, they were aware that ‘the consultations in East Timor in actual fact were a referendum’ (Johnson 2011: 131). In theory, ‘it was possible that a majority of the state legislature could reject the provisions in the CPA for their area, and call for a referendum’ (Johnson 2011: 131-32). The modified version of popular consultation they introduced into the CPA ‘was ambiguous enough to cover the views of both parties’ (Johnson 2011: 226, footnote 66). Apparently, it is this ambiguity that convinced both parties during the peace negotiation. It seems the mediators’ prime intention was to convince the two parties to sign the agreement rather than providing an amicable solution for the two areas. It is this ambiguity that, at a later stage, gave room for contesting interpretations, which subsequently stirred tensions in the two areas during peace implementation processes to the point of their drift back to war in 2011.

The CPA defines loosely what is meant by popular consultation. It then describes the implementing steps to be taken by the state legislative body to establish whether the CPA had met, or had not met, the political, economic, social and administrative aspirations of their people. Unlike the international experiences of East Timor, Aceh, and the Kenyan constitutional process, popular consultation was defined in the CPA as:

⁸ Nicholas ‘Fink’ Haysom worked as chief legal adviser throughout the presidency of Nelson Mandela and on private peace initiatives until 2002. He was involved in the Burundi Peace Talks and was then principal advisor (2002-2005) to the Mediator in the Sudanese Peace Process.

a democratic right and mechanism to ascertain the views of the people of Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States on the comprehensive agreement reached by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. [...] That this comprehensive agreement shall be subjected to the will of the people of the two States through their respective democratically elected legislatures.⁹

This descriptive definition implies that the Sudanese version of popular consultations is not a referendum, not a plebiscite, and not even an election with ballots. In fact, the negotiators employed a political trick to convince the SPLM/A negotiating team to accept the deal. The trick is that they introduced a term which is 'popular' in name only but 'parliamentary' in practice, i.e., indirect participation of people through their elected representatives. This is a departure from the international experiences which suggest that all popular consultations involve direct participation of the people in decision-making.

To facilitate its operation, a special Popular Consultation Act was enacted in January 2010, and a code of conduct was agreed upon by the political parties in October 2010. Article 15.1 of the act stipulates that:

[...] the people of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile State shall have the following choices:

- a. Approve and endorse the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and consider that it is a final resolution of the political conflict in the concerned state; or
- b. Consider that the Agreement does not meet their aspirations.

Article 15.2.c of the act explains the necessary steps should people consider that the agreement does not meet their aspirations:

[...] If any of the two Legislative Assemblies decides that the Agreement does not achieve the aspirations of the people of the state, according to paragraph (1) (b) above, this Assembly shall hold deliberations to

⁹ See Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the GoS and SPLM/A, page 74, points 3.1 and 3.2. <http://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/Documents/General/cpa-en.pdf>, accessed 29 August 2014.

determine the shortcomings in details and then, the Legislative Assembly of the state shall engage in negotiations with the Government to rectify these shortcomings in the framework of the Agreement, in order to meet the aspirations of the people of the concerned state within one month from the date of the resolution of the concerned Legislative Assembly.

The question of delaying the popular consultation process in South Kordofan beyond the entire period of the CPA deserves a brief note. Article 15.2.k of the act stipulated that the popular consultation procedures should be concluded before the end of the transitional period on 11 July 2011. Even if the war had not started in the region, popular consultation would have not even started before the end of the transitional period anyway. The Code of Conduct of 2010 stipulates that popular consultation should be ‘conducted in an inclusive manner and, in particular, shall ensure the effective participation of women, the different ethnic, cultural and religious communities and social groups in each state,’ and it should ‘[r]eflect accurately and treat with respect, minority views on the issues under consideration.’¹⁰

Despite all these descriptive steps, the exact meaning and intended outcome of popular consultation remained highly contested, therefore, subjected to different interpretations by the contesting parties and observers. As early as 2006, Jan Pronk, then United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in the Sudan, lamented that:

The future status of South Kordofan has not been unequivocally established in the CPA. [...] the CPA has only stipulated that their future status should be determined by a consultative process. When? Between whom? How? Nobody knows. (cited in Komey 2010a: 144)

Along the same line, Ismā‘īl Ḳamīs Jallāb, then Chairman of the SPLM/A and Governor of South Kordofan state (2005-2007), noted

¹⁰ See Common Code of Conduct for the Referenda and Popular Consultations, October 2010, Part IX, points 43(c) and (d). <http://www.splmtoday.com/docs/south-south-dialogue/2010%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Referenda%20and%20Popular%20Consultation.pdf>, accessed 29 August 2014.

that 'our objective was that the Nuba Mountains should have self-determination. Instead, the CPA came with something called popular consultation, of which we are not even sure what it means' (Komey 2010b: 55). Depending on political interests of each party, it ranges from a mere consultation of the people to improve the level of development in their respective regions for some NCP leaders, to regional autonomy or self-rule, or even a referendum, for some SPLM/A leaders and supporters (Carter Center 2011: 3; Komey 2010a: 144). The source of this ambiguity can be traced back to the way popular consultation was originally engineered and subsequently introduced into the CPA.

Practically, popular consultations did not start in South Kordofan due to the delay in the implementation of the protocol in South Kordofan. In Blue Nile, however, some steps were taken before being interrupted by renewed violent conflict in September 2011. The legislative body in Blue Nile State did not assess and evaluate the implementation of the agreement as stipulated by the protocol. Therefore, it did not take a decision as to whether the agreement had or had not achieved the aspirations of the people of the state. Instead, the legislative body started, through its Assessment and Evaluation Commission, to conduct public hearings to sense public opinions.

Ascertaining 'the views of the people' on the CPA had been reduced to public hearings in the Blue Nile State. As shown below, the way the public hearings were conducted could not ensure the representation of the will of the people. The process was tense as people were mobilised along political positions of the two parties. In some meetings the hearings were coupled with violence.

Approximately 73,000 citizens have participated in the 112 citizen hearings held across Blue Nile State since early January 2011. However, the hearings were highly politicised [...] with the main parties 'coaching' followers to call for either autonomy or federalism without discussion of the meaning of these concepts. (Carter Center 2011: 1)

In fact, eight planned hearings were postponed indefinitely due to threats and violence, including the death of a community leader in Abugarin, near Bau (Carter Center 2011: 3). This prevailing tense and

highly politicised situation hindered assessing the popular consultations' four themes, namely constitutional, political, administrative and economic issues, defined in Article 3 of the Popular Consultation Act. Moreover, the Carter Center observed intransparent data entries and inaccuracies in quantifying citizens' views, which were expressed orally. It concluded that:

much of data entry has resolved around assessing how many people spoke for autonomy or federalism. These concepts were vaguely defined in the hearings themselves and overlapping in meaning and scope. A simple count of how many people spoke for one or another system of government will not add meaning to a discussion on the relationship of the state with the national government. (Carter Center 2011: 4)

As mentioned before, popular consultations did not take off in South Kordofan due to the contestation over election results, which erupted in violent conflicts in June 2011. However, towards the end of 2010, there were some preparatory processes for popular consultation. With financial and technical assistance from international actors including UNMIS, USAID, and the Forum of Federations, state authorities in collaboration with civil society organisations conducted civic education focusing, first, on the importance, principles and objectives of popular consultations and, second, on how ordinary people could practically assess the CPA. Though the two parties worked towards a unified definition of popular consultation, it was evident that each party was promoting its original perspective pursued during peace negotiations. Through my direct participation as a member of a group of experts facilitating the process of civic education, it was observable that civil society groups were concerned with trying to quantify the views and narrative claims of people pertaining to the assessment of the CPA, including its performance in key aspects of local development.

Quantifying local views into a set of measurable indicators for the purpose of an assessment of the CPA was and still is a key issue. The central government is likely to file its own report that provides some statistics and numerical evidence to prove that the CPA has met the aspirations of the local people. Both state and central authorities will

do everything possible to prove they have fulfilled their commitments in implementing the CPA, particularly the protocol of the two states. To cross-check the credibility and validity of a top-down government claim, most participating non-state actors felt a need for a bottom-up report, with quantitative data, reflecting the real situation on the ground, backed by narratives and views of local people and their respective civic and political institutions.

Civil society groups and elites began to conduct bottom-up surveys to collect primary and secondary data to build an empirical evidence base regarding realities on the ground in key development areas: service delivery, land rights, security, social peace and reconciliation, and political participation. This pre-popular consultation activity was meant to pave the way for the expected elected legislative body. This pre-popular consultation process did not happen in the Blue Nile. At some stage during the civic education campaign, the government of South Kordofan State became less enthusiastic. While the campaign was gaining momentum and popularity, the governor decided unexpectedly to stop it with a promise to resume it after the election. But this did not happen due to the eruption of violent conflict in the region following the announcement of highly contested election results.

In short, the popular consultation proposed for the two regions is deficient of the element of direct vote of the entire electorate (people) to either accept or reject the protocol as a final settlement for their conflicts with the central state. What prevailed rather was a type of 'democracy' in which decision-making power is vested in the state assembly as opposed to a referendum decision or 'consensus democracy' in which a broader range of opinions is taken into account (Gandul 2010).

In a political situation, like that of Sudan, mounting with sharp political and ethnic divisions, recurring violence, and frequent political manipulation, it is questionable to what extent the parliamentary representatives express 'the will of the people' in deciding on a political future. Contested election results in South Kordofan in May 2011, for example, underline people's serious doubts about the winning party, the NCP, and its will to give people a voice through a popular consultation process. In the election, 191,582 people or 43.90 per cent of total voters voted for the SPLM, while 182,751 or 41.88 per cent of all voters voted for the NCP. Despite this, according to the official results,

the NCP won 22 geographical seats in the state parliament while the SPLM, with the majority of votes, won only ten geographical seats (Verjee 2011: 7). As the war continued unabated, all the hopes anchored on popular consultation faded away, not only among the people in the region but across Sudan. This is because '[a] successful popular consultation could begin to transform Sudanese politics by realigning political interests from political parties to the states and could provide a test for new governance structures between the center and the states' (Gluck 2010: 1).

Conclusion

The viability of popular consultation as a mechanism to provide a solution to the political conflict in South Kordofan is questionable. A bird's eye view of the salient features of the protocol in general and popular consultation in particular leads to the following conclusions.

First, the right of the people to rectify the CPA to redress their political, sociocultural and economic grievances in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states through popular consultation is restricted to the CPA's framework. It is this very framework which needs to be challenged, if rectification is to be made.

Second, the meaning of 'popular consultation' and how it should be carried out is ambiguous and, therefore, the concept is politically controversial. Its name connotes it is a 'popular' or 'people practice', i.e. direct participation of all people, while in practice it is a 'parliamentary' exercise by legislation, i.e. indirect participation of the people through their elected representatives.

Third, the possible outcome of popular consultation was a point of political controversy resulting in speculation by different political actors, particularly the two partners to the agreement, the NCP and the SPLM/A. For the NCP, the exercise of popular consultation is consultation of the local people within the current so-called federal system of Sudan. In the SPLM/A's view, popular consultation should lead to self-determination, in case the people reject the protocol as a final resolution to their conflict with the central state.

Fourth, the current government is dominated by the NCP which has a clear political position regarding the two regions. It is the same NCP that resisted the inclusion of the two areas in the CPA in the first place.

An engagement in negotiations with such a government will unquestionably lead to further undermining, suppression or manipulation of such a decisive political exercise. The tension over the 2011 election in South Kordofan, which contributed to the eruption of violent conflict, was not about the election as such. Rather it was about the expected popular consultation outcome, because the two contesting parties, with two divergent political agendas, were aware that the winning party would unilaterally determine the final political choice of the region. Hence, none was prepared to be a loser in that election.

Fifth, the failure to achieve lasting peace and social order in the region is a result of multiple factors: (i) a lack of political will to implement the CPA coupled with political manoeuvres and destructive bargaining by the two partners, signatories to the agreement; (ii) the way the CPA was engineered with loopholes and ambiguities regarding some key terms, particularly 'popular consultation'; (iii) a dominant culture of militarism, violence and exclusionary rule over a culture of civil governance, democracy, peace and inclusion. These factors, among others, contributed to the inevitable emergence of ongoing violence in the two regions instead of consolidating peace, political stability and social reconciliation. In the absence of strong political will and commitment to the signed agreements, a discussion of technicalities and models like popular consultation or election is irrelevant.

Sixth, the resumption of war in the region in June 2011 put a halt to the CPA-driven political processes including the projected popular consultation. This was followed by a ban on the northern section of the SPLM as a political party and a partner in power in the two regions. In this situation of war and hostilities between the two parties, the NCP and the SPLM-N, coupled with ethno-political divisions, insecurity and mass displacement of local communities, it is difficult to conduct an inclusive political process that will meet the will of the people in the region. In fact, a key question remains: is it a postponement or it is an entire cancellation of popular consultation? In any case, reaching a negotiated settlement to end the conflict is a precondition for resuming a credible and inclusive process of popular consultation, or seeking an alternative political mechanism for restoring peaceful social order in the currently war-torn regions of South Kordofan / Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile.

Finally, the whole process points to a need to revisit and critically analyse the way the CPA was conceived. And subsequently, to redress the manner in which the conflicts in these contested areas were and still are (mis)conceived and (mis)handled. The importance of a critical rethinking at this decisive moment of the emerging two Sudans stems from the fact that the potential international mediators are likely to repeat the same mistakes, while trying to intervene and provide solutions to the unfolding violent conflicts in the two regions.

There is a tendency among the involved actors to avoid creating unease and to 'close one's eyes' to diverging interpretations and contradictions, refraining from disputes for the sake of reaching a sort of peace agreement. But such practical settlements in which disparities are ignored are threatened by circumstances in which un-addressed issues resurface and 'open the eyes'. The likely result is a re-escalation of tension. Any envisaged agreement on the questions of the currently war-torn regions, including Darfur, must envision and ensure lasting peace and political stability nationwide.

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How DDR Shifted its Face in South Sudan

Timm Sureau



Figure 1: Regina and son in her tukul, Torit, South Sudan, photo taken by Timm Sureau, September 2011.

The picture above was taken in 2011 in the town of Torit, in southeastern South Sudan. It was photographed during a year of ethnographic fieldwork,¹ which dealt with the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme. The woman in the picture is Regina; I followed her through her reintegration programme and gathered data on her living situation.

Since Regina recently finished a DDR programme, she is now officially an ex-combatant of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Regina started her work in the army in 1999 but she never bore arms. Thus, she was never a combatant and disarmament was never necessary. Her certificate, like all other certificates of the first 504 registered ex-combatants in Torit, states that she handed in one

¹ The research was made possible by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (Saale) and the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, both in Germany. This paper will be used in a revised version in my dissertation.

Kalashnikov and 30 bullets. During her time in the army, her tasks involved grinding grains and washing clothes and dishes. Sometimes she and her colleagues had to walk a day and a half and carry food on their heads to the frontline. Her 'demobilisation' took place in 2006 when all soldiers were registered, and she was told to go home. Since then, she has been waiting for 'reintegration'. Between 2006 and 2010 she did subsistence farming of sorghum, peanuts and maize. In addition, she produced alcohol and pastry – all sold locally – to earn her living. She is married. Her husband lives and works for the military in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, and is rarely home in Torit.

The boy on her back is her son. He was born between her registration for reintegration and the actual start of the programme. Recently, he started answering to the name of Didi: a short form of DDR.

His naming can be seen as part of a web of ideas including DDR, peace-building, Security Sector Reform (SSR) and the like. Not only Regina with her hopes expressed in the naming, but innumerable other actors try to manipulate the form of this web by pushing, pulling, and stretching it: international donors, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), implementing partners such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit International Services (GIZIS), the South Sudan DDR Commission, the National DDR Coordination Council, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the Government of Sudan (GoS), the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and many others.

In this text I trace some of the logic and ideas which contributed to naming the boy Didi. I also analyse how a DDR programme, which should be aimed at ex-combatants, was transformed into a sort of schooling for some people, including a few ex-combatants. In other words, I will describe how the process of DDR was carried out in South Sudan, and ended up including the participation of Regina, a woman who never fought.

DDR as a Model

What is Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration? The basic idea of DDR is simple. It responds to the assessment that after a war there are too many combatants, regardless of whether they are considered soldiers when they served in an army, or rebels (or guerrillas,

militiamen or freedom fighters) when they served in a rebel movement. After a peace agreement marking the end of war, they are no longer needed for fighting. Armed and trained with weapons, they are perceived as a threat to security and to the intended state's monopoly on violence. Therefore somebody has to disarm and demobilise them – take away their weapons and ask them to leave the army. From that moment on, they are no longer members of the military, rebel movements, or militias but count as civilians.

This was a usual part of the peace building process, even before the UN's first dedicated disarmament operation in 1989. A disarmed and demobilised person, however, without knowledge of how to conduct a civilian life, how to earn a living outside the army, and lacking contacts with civilians still poses a threat to the newly established peace and the intended social order. Thus the idea of reintegration came about. The idea was to teach the ex-combatant to earn his or her living through ordinary professions and to interact normally with other civilians.

First Implementations of DDR

According to Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis (2010: 44) who propose a comprehensive list of DDR processes, the first as well as the fourth internally driven DDR programs were carried out in Colombia in 1953 and in 1984 respectively, the second in China (1954-1958), the third in Zimbabwe in 1980. The fifth was externally driven and carried out by the UN in Namibia in 1989.

For both periods in Colombia, incentives for civilian life were given to ex-combatants, but there was no training after disarmament. The incentives consisted of some benefits (Holguin 2010: 59) and the policy of '*olvido y perdón en pro de la paz* (forgetting and pardon in favour of peace)' (Laplante and Theidon 2006: 59 emphasis in the original; Theidon 2007) but did not include reintegration training programmes.

In China (1954-1958), veterans struggled for remuneration. Some formed veteran committees and finally succeeded in building a National Veteran Committee; nonetheless they continually had to struggle for recognition (Diamant 2009: 210-212). The emergence of the veteran committee coincided with the deployment of re-education programmes in China. These programmes, however, were directed

toward larger parts of the population and were put in place to convince the Chinese of Mao's version of communism.

In Zimbabwe a DDR programme was carried out in 1980. In the 'Operation Merger', combatants of three forces involved in the former war were integrated into a newly established Zimbabwean army (Dzineza 2005: 64). While a possible (but not necessarily well-functioning) strategy is to incorporate all combatants into the national army, this does not correspond with the idea of reintegration programmes, which are 'assistance measures provided to former combatants that would increase the potential for their own and their families' economic and social reintegration into civil society' (UNDPKO 1999: 15).

For Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis the first DDR was implemented in 1953; prior programmes were not implemented in the way the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) sees DDR. According to Rufer (2005: 11), 'the UN's first dedicated disarmament operation' was implemented in Namibia in 1989 as part of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). This initiative was established 'to ensure the early independence of Namibia' through free and fair elections and also ensure that hostile acts were ended and troops confined to base (UNTAG 2001).

Rufer considers the subsequent DDR programmes in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the early 1990s as important, though only in the case of El Salvador were there 'clear rules and regulations in the peace agreement with respect to DDR' (Rufer 2005: 85). During the 1990s many programmes were implemented all over the world (compare lists in Rufer 2005: 11, 42; Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis 2010: 44). I will skip this development and only mention one aspect. What is relevant for this discussion is that throughout the 1990s, there was no general framework for the implementation of DDR programmes.

Learning from Failures: Standardising DDR

In 1999, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued a press release commenting on the outcome of peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions. It admits the failure of several missions. The press release states that 'despite the conclusion of peace agreements by the warring parties and the presence of United Nations peacekeeping missions on the ground' fighting continued (UNSC 1999). Viewing DDR as

important to solving this issue, the UNSC urged the UN Secretary General (UNSG) to release a 'report containing his analysis, his observations and recommendations, in particular those relating to principles and guidelines as well as practices, experiences and lessons' within six months (UNSC 1999). In other words, after a number of unsuccessful peace missions which are not specified by the press release, the UN Security Council (UNSC) included DDR processes as an integral part of their peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. It not only made DDR a matter of highest concern for the UNSC, but it also stressed the need for principles and guidelines, i.e. for the standardisation of DDR.

Seven months later, in early 2000, the Secretary General issued a 23-page report (UNSC 2000). In 1999 and 2000 steps were taken to standardise the DDR approach and build an official script, which can be summarised as follows. The aim is stabilising peace. Techniques used are downsizing the military groups and bringing the target group, namely combatants, back to civilian life. Implementation occurs through vocational training and providing people with materials to start something new. A precondition is building local capacity (infrastructure, economy, governmental institutions, judicial system). International actors should work together with national ones. The primary means of transmitting DDR to new places is the inclusion of DDR in the peace agreement. 'The agreement [...] should outline their basic approach to the problem, including strategies and time-frames' (UNSC 2000: 3). In 2010, the UNDPKO published a report on the Second Generation DDR. 'The focus of Second Generation programmes shifts away from military structures towards the community as a whole' (UNDPKO 2010: 8) and emphasizes the community instead of single ex-combatants. It also promotes flexibility towards the local context and it integrates into the Security Sector reform (see below).²

Challenges of DDR

The aim and ideal outcome of the reintegration process is peace, however there are challenges along the way. The assumption, or a part

² The basis for the DDR in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan is the DDR as it was described in the UNSC 2000 document, although some ideas of the Integrated DDR Standards of 2006 were integrated in small pilot projects according to Nichols (2011: 40). See below for more details.

of it, is that peace can be reached if ex-combatants do not have an interest in returning to war and want instead to be civilians. My research shows that the aim of reintegration was silently limited to economic reintegration. Ideally, ex-combatants reintegrate into society, and DDR gives every individual a decent chance to participate in the economy and in the social and political system, regardless of their group belonging, age, gender, etc.

Given that the infrastructure of war-torn regions is often in desolate condition, such reintegration is difficult to achieve. Its implementation in South Sudan was adjusted in light of challenges related to infrastructure and stability. The adjustments, which I argue are omissions, are reflected in the request for proposals of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Sudan 2009) charged with organising the DDR programme: 'agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry; small business; vocational training and alternative education' are the sectors of economic reintegration to be addressed by bidders (UNDP Sudan 2009: 1). The development of the local community is not part of the request for bids.

Reintegration is viewed as accomplished when an ex-combatant gets a fixed amount of money and receives a few months of training, which is to provide him with some ideas about a selected reintegration option. Afterwards he receives a certificate, a start-up kit appropriate to his option for reintegration and a stamp or a hole in his ex-combatant card which proves his participation in the programme. While this achievement is easy to measure and therefore interesting for evaluations, the implementation of a reintegration programme is not necessarily connected to the success or failure of the DDR process.

Let us assume it is possible to find international actors to carry out a DDR process. Finding capable local partners is more difficult. It requires (i) school-educated people to be the counterparts of international actors and (ii) a state, a regional authority or another form of local organisation that supports the process and which, in the best case, has the will to perform DDR, or at least does not object to it. In war-torn states, these elements might not be present.

Furthermore, after war, the economy may be severely damaged. Returning to civilian life may be unattractive for soldiers due to the living conditions of civilians. There may be no community ready to

receive ex-combatants in its midst because its members are struggling to make ends meet in their own lives.

Job creation in rural and urban settings requires infrastructure to transport local goods to the outside or to bring them in. It requires a production or marketing chain into which the ex-combatant can be integrated. The general situation should also give the ex-combatant the chance to participate in a fair and transparent political and judicial system. These circumstances are needed to actually reintegrate the ex-combatant but are not easy to establish.

The term DDR, especially the R for reintegration, comprises all the above-mentioned aspects, but many actors are not aware of multifaceted meaning of the term. In South Sudan, only part of this internationally circulating model was implemented. As stipulated in the UNSC (2000) report of the Secretary General, DDR is included in most contemporary peace agreements. Reintegration is the most complex component, as it consists not of one act, as disarmament does, but of an analysis of the economy, the socio-cultural and the successful integration of the ex-combatant into it. For implementing NGOs, DDR has become a great source of income, even if the local economies are suffering.³

DDR regulates the sizes of armies of formerly warring forces, and it is an integral part of peacebuilding measures implemented by the UN and other international actors. Yet, there is lack of clarity among actors about the definition of reintegration and the implications of it. The consequence is a broad array of intentions and expectations, in which discontent can be expected. These different expectations and their consequences will be discussed.

Adaptation of DDR in Sudan

The above-mentioned report by the UN Secretary General (UNSC 2000) served as a blueprint for the workshops held by the

³ According to UNDP Sudan 2012, between 2008 and 2011, UNDP contributed 358 million US dollars to the DDR programme in Sudan (before the South's secession). In an article in a German newspaper, that became well-known in South Sudan, the author revealed that huge amounts of money were spent on employees of the UN and international organisations (Schlindwein 2010).

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)⁴ from the first peace talks in 2002 until the final peace talks in Naivasha, Kenya in 2004, which resulted in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The DDR process was included in the CPA as demanded by the UNSC Report. However, perhaps due to tacit intentions, the international experts in the workshops did not successfully transmit the full model of DDR, which entails not only implementation but also means accounting for the declared aim, specific techniques and a particular target group. Instead, as we will see, the model of DDR was adjusted with time. It changed according to the interests of the actors involved, the constraints it met and the functions it happened to serve.

In 2004, members of the National Congress Party, the ruling party in Sudan, and members of the SPLM/A, the rebel movement, met in Naivasha, Kenya. This meeting was the last step for the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which was signed two weeks later, on 9 January 2005. In preparation for the meeting, several workshops were organised by UNDP in Naivasha, in which other international actors were involved. A member of the SPLM/A at the time told me that he participated in a workshop in Naivasha in September 2004, where DDR experts talked about their experiences in Angola, Cambodia and Sierra Leone.⁵ According to him, DDR was one of the few easy topics in the making of the CPA. Everyone agreed that DDR was a useful tool after the war. Both sides had large numbers of soldiers who would theoretically not be needed in times of peace and which were expensive to maintain. Downsizing therefore appeared as a plausible and useful step. But he added that on both sides, there were those who hoped to downsize the military of the rival forces only, but not their own. He further suspected that the SPLM/A mentioned overly high numbers of combatants in order to get assistance and jobs for people in southern Sudan.

The SPLM/A and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) defined DDR measures in the CPA vaguely in the hope of later adapting them to their ideas. And they did not retain the option of an end to DDR during the

⁴ The by now eight East African member states try to increase peace, security, economic cooperation, food security and environmental protection through increased cooperation facilitated by IGAD. South Sudan joined IGAD in November 2011.

⁵ Interview with Muḥammad Yussif, 3 March, 2011, Khartoum, Sudan.

so-called Interim Period (2005-2011). The content of the CPA resembles the UNSC (2000) report only as far as it is useful for the parties. The UNSC report is clear on what it requires from the agreement:

The agreement should stipulate responsibilities of leading national institutions and other actors essential to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and should outline their basic approach to the problem, including strategies and time-frames. Such clarity may assist all parties to understand and prepare for their commitments, and can prevent delays that could otherwise be destabilizing. (UNSC 2000: 3-4)

The CPA clearly includes DDR, but the strategies and time-frames are not at all concrete. The agreement gives a 'start-continue-continue' order which consists of four phases (6, 36 and 36 months, the duration of the fourth phase is not stated) (SPLM/A and GoS 2005: 96).

While in the UNSC (2000) report the downsizing of the armies was rather implicit, the CPA explicitly mentions 'the reduction, demobilization and downsizing of the forces' (SPLM/A and GoS 2005: 88). When compared with the report of 2000, the CPA is in line with the implementation, the way of transmitting DDR to new places and the involved implementing actors. Yet, the CPA is opaque about the aim, the techniques, the preconditions and the target group. However, the CPA is more detailed about the formerly implicit downsizing of armed groups. In December 2005 the UN tried to change some parts of the DDR provisions in the CPA, but fears were increasing that this would introduce new discussions about the entire CPA and the idea was eventually dropped (Nichols 2011: 12).

DDR in the CPA seen from the SPLM/A side

Southern Sudan had experienced 21 years of war. Therefore suspicion against the rival army forces during the peace negotiations and the following period was high. While international experts were talking about downsizing armies, the SPLM/A and the SAF were hoping to restructure their armies to render them more efficient. As Muḥammad Yussif, a participant in the negotiations for the CPA phrased it: 'People were negotiating peace but preparing for war, unfortunately'.⁶

⁶ Interview with Muḥammad Yussif, 3 March, 2011, Khartoum, Sudan.

Effective downsizing of the SPLA was never intended by its leadership. Few people believed in a long-lasting peace in the South. There was a need to restructure the army – to transform it from loosely linked military units to the national army of an emerging state. The implicit intention of the SPLA was therefore very different from the aim mentioned in the report of the UN Secretary General (UNSC 2000). The intention was not to stabilise peace, but to prepare for another war or, phrased differently, to be able to protect the emerging country from outside attack.

People participating in the programme were not members of the target group. The ‘combatants’ selected for participation in the DDR programme were people no longer needed in the SPLA and that, in case of inclusion in the regular army of South Sudan, would have been entitled to salaries. Thus, most of them were women, old men or disabled soldiers, Regina being one of them. As far as UNDP (the coordinating organisation) and its donors were concerned, this did not pose a problem, as in former conflict zones female ex-combatants were often disadvantaged. These international partners did not want to see such discrimination repeated in Sudan, and the offer of the SPLM/A to start with female ex-combatants was compatible with that concern. International discourse on gender, and on disadvantaged groups, coupled with the interest of the SPLA silently shifted focus from the official script of a mass demobilisation to a restructuring of the army.

The lack of organisation among the SPLA was one of the reasons why mass demobilisation did not happen. The SPLA was unable to name all its combatants in 2004; it just did not know them all. The distinction between combatant and civilian was very difficult to make as many people were directly or indirectly involved with the SPLA. Only in 2006 did the SPLA start registering soldiers, and still the numbers remained unclear. The SPLA (and the SAF) viewed DDR as a sort of reward for soldiers and civilians to whom they were indebted. It is therefore not surprising that the number of soldiers was exaggerated. The number of SPLA members to be demobilised, first estimated at 300,000, was negotiated down to 140,000, then reduced to 60,000 and finally raised to 90,000 soldiers to equal the number in northern Sudan (Nichols 2011: 12, 15). The numbers were not matters of fact but of negotiation. The final numbers were 90,000 SPLM/A

members for southern and 90,000 SAF members for northern Sudan, 180,000 in total.

The preconditions for a successful reintegration could not be fulfilled in the post-war situation. Other projects were prioritised, and during the first years nearly nothing happened in the DDR process. From 2006 to 2008, preregistrations were largely below predictions. The fact that soldiers started receiving salaries in 2006 did not serve as an incentive for soldiers to engage in DDR.

At the beginning, local partners were not skilful enough to meet requirements to be full partners of UNDP, at least that was UNDP's view.⁷ This put UNDP and its implementing partners (IPs) in a difficult situation. Although the administration of funds was in the hands of UNDP, the official owner of the programme was the South Sudanese government through the SSDDRC. Communication between SSDDRC and UNDP was mediocre to say the least, and the IPs had to fulfil the wishes of both sides.

SPLA (and respectively SAF) members adhered to the official DDR discourse, which they had learned in workshops, rather than voicing their alternative intentions. They put UNDP in a difficult situation as well: while UNDP had to show results to international donors, the SPLA would delay delivering lists of ex-combatants (actively or by not prioritising them). The SPLA had adopted its own plan regarding what to do with DDR. The international community eventually realised this, but DDR was already an integral part of UNDP tasks.

DDR Reaches Implementation, Example of Torit

Despite the differing perspectives, DDR had to be carried out, because it was written in the CPA. A programme with many open questions and unsolved problems was doomed to failure from the beginning but had to be implemented.

In 2006 soldiers started receiving salaries, as mentioned above. But women, old men, and disabled persons were told to wait for reintegration and were sent home. So, instead of receiving monthly salaries after years or decades of being unpaid soldiers, they waited for reintegration from 2006 onwards with rising expectations. And since 2006

⁷ Interview with Anna Kima Hoth, the SSDDRC Deputy Chairperson, 8 September, 2011, Juba, South Sudan.

they were integrating into society on their own account. Between 2006 and 2008 preregistrations were completed, followed in 2009 by the first registrations. From 2009 to 2011 about 12,000 persons, combatants or not, went through the process of reintegration.

In Torit, the reintegration programme started in February 2011. Most actors, if not all of them, knew⁸ the SPLM/A was distributing fake disarmament and demobilisation certificates. In this regard I was repeatedly told that in Torit, 504 out of 504 disarmament certificates of 'ex-combatants', who registered noted 'one Kalashnikov and 30 bullets' as arms they had handed in. Despite this, UNDP, implementing partners and the SSDDRC continued, and had to continue, their work. The programme had changed from an extremely complex model, including disarmament, family and community integration and development, overall security and a stable and fair judicial system, to the mere implementation of some training (see below) for some people who might or might not have served in the SPLA. Instead of the type of DDR envisioned by the UNSC, the programme turned out to be some sort of schooling for people regardless of whether they could fight or not, and who already had to integrate themselves into society.

Implementing Partners in Torit

The UNDP request for proposals showed an orientation toward numbers mentioning 1,500 US dollars for each ex-combatant (UNDP Sudan 2009: 12). According to the request, not more than 10 per cent of submitted budgets should be planned for overhead costs (i.e. ongoing administration expenses not attributed specially to the project). As the projects were rather new and small, however, they might require using the full 10 per cent, which reduces the money for each ex-combatant to 1,350 US dollars. The material package, that is, the start-up kit given to each ex-combatant at the end of the programme, reduces the amount to around 1,100 US dollars. Initially, GIZIS offered thirteen months of training, but due to the limited amount of money allocated to the programme by UNDP, GIZIS could eventually only offer four months.⁹

⁸ According to, for example, interviews with employees from UNDP-DDR (Juba and Torit) and GIZIS (Juba and Torit) registered in the period from August 2011 to April 2012.

⁹ Email contact with Kathrin Nutt, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer of GIZIS

Daily allowances for the participants were seven pounds (approximately two US-dollars). That reduced the amount by 120 US-dollar to 980 US-dollars. Offering a four-month programme, the daily costs for each ex-combatant amounted to about 8 US-dollars. Considering costs for transport, staff (teachers, local coordinators, guards, etc.), gas for generators, repairs of an almost destroyed school, the GIZ's offer of a four-month programme appeared reasonable (UNDP Sudan 2009: 7, 12).¹⁰

In the programme run by GIZIS (previously GTZIS), a challenge was to include community integration and other similar activities. Even though it was not part of the contract, the GIZIS helped building storages for grain in three communities outside of Torit. The tools employed for teaching were given to the community and they paid the salaries of local teachers in these places. I agree with the local staff from GIZIS, UNDP and the South Sudan DDR Commission in Torit, as well as the GIZIS and the South Sudan DDR Commission in Juba that GIZIS DDR did the best job of all IPs 'in the scope of the limits of the program'. Other IPs apparently taught only six weeks without vocational training and some ex-combatants did not receive start-up-kits. In three states of South Sudan there was no reintegration done at all. Nonetheless, four months of teaching of GIZIS – one month of training numeracy and literacy and three months of vocational training – were insufficient to change the economic situation of every ex-combatant in view of the extremely difficult economic situation in the city of Torit. Nothing sustainable was planned nor carried out.

Where do the 1,500 US dollars per head come from? For GIZIS, it came from the bid. According to Ryan Nichols (2011: 58), UNDP received 1,500 US dollars from international donors that should have been topped up with 250 US dollars from the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and the Government of National Unity (GoNU). I do not know whether the 250 US dollars per ex-combatant were paid. The low sums involved is, following the logic of my simplified calculations, not enough to run a full reintegration programme as called for in the UNSC's report. Rather, projects were implemented to fulfil stipulations. The following accounts of individual cases will show that the

DDR in Juba, 29 November, 2011.

¹⁰ Several conversations with Project Manager GIZIS DDR Torit in 2011.

aim of the UN model for DDR seems to have travelled independently of its institutional realisation.

The upcoming cases of Regina and John reflect some of the challenges many ex-combatants faced in the reintegration process of the DDR programme. Among the participants that selected the option 'computer', none was working with his or her computer in February 2012. Some people from the option 'agriculture' told me their tools had already broken; others told me they are 'ok', but none seemed to have changed in a significant way his or her way of producing crops. They are engaged in subsistence farming, not in an income-generating activity.¹¹

Regina

Let us return to Regina and her son Didi, whose name shows the high expectations his mother and father and the rest of his family entertained towards DDR. Didi was born in the period between registration for reintegration in November 2010 and the actual start of classes in February 2011. This period was rather long due to complications during registration for the referendum on independence from Sudan and the actual referendum itself (December 2010 and January 2011). During the registration period, GIZIS told ex-combatants what to expect.

Regina had been waiting for a reintegration programme for years, and she and other people were enthusiastic when it finally started. A small presentation of the content of the programme by GIZIS did not lower their expectations. They were, and some mysteriously still are, waiting for a big economic change and quantities of goods to be given to them.

The economic situation of Regina did not significantly change with reintegration. Before the reintegration programme, Regina worked. Work consisted in deep-frying some flour mixed with sugar and milk powder in the morning and selling the resulting pastry at the nearby school – net earnings of 20 Sudanese pounds (about four US dollars) – and of organising her field for subsistence in her village.

¹¹ Conversations held in January and February 2012 with 9 of 12 ex-combatants with the option computer and 20 of 120 ex-combatants with the option agriculture.

Regina joined the reintegration programme in 2011. Each ex-combatant received seven pounds per day of training (about two US dollars) to compensate for the loss of the earnings from their regular income generating activities. Regina used half the money to pay for food for her family. The other half she used to pay some boys in her village to work in her field.

After the end of the programme she got sick with heavy headaches, typhoid she believes. She was only a shadow of herself. And she did not have sufficient money to buy medicine. Only after I helped her out with ten pounds did she get better and started working again. To restart work, she borrowed 50 pounds from neighbours. After three days she had earned 60 pounds and was able to give back the 50 pounds she had borrowed. She told me she was very happy about my help because she could not decide on anything during her sickness.

The unfortunate part of the story is that she likely got into this situation – being sick and left without money for medicine – because of her participation in the reintegration programme, which reduced her earnings (from twenty to seven pounds a day). Usually other family members would come to help her, but this time two other family members were sick, so no one was able to support her. The effect of the start-up kit was little, though she did have some more tools with which to work.

Regina had high expectations towards the reintegration programme, which is reflected in the name of her son. She hoped for an improvement in her situation but instead experienced financial problems.

John

John had high expectations as well. Not only as an ex-combatant anticipating the reintegration programme but also as a wounded hero, as he was disabled during a battle.

He joined the SPLA in 1986. At that time he went to Ethiopia where he was trained to be a combatant and received some basic education. He fought on the front from 1991 to 1992. In 1992 he was wounded in Kapoita. As a result, his right arm is numb, and he limps. He continued working in the SPLA as a ‘wounded hero’, as he keeps saying. He was in charge of storage and other logistics in Eastern Equatoria. He left the SPLA in 2006, but he continued administrating the Eastern

Equatoria Wounded Heroes group until 2009. His disarmament had therefore already happened in 1992 and his demobilisation in 2006. Just like Regina, he was impatient for the reintegration programme to come.¹²

John is officially ‘completely reintegrated’, which means he completed the reintegration programme and received his graduation certificate. He chose the ‘computer’ option during the reintegration programme. He learned or should have learned the basics of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and the use of basic functions in Windows, like creating new folders, etc. – all in four months.

Like every ex-combatant, he received a start-up kit according to his option. In his case this consisted of one small notebook computer. He had the idea of opening a shop in Torit together with three other ex-combatants from the same option. They wanted to provide services like scanning documents, printing, typing letters, etc. His expectations for the reintegration program remained high, though he already graduated from it. The following statement shows an attitude towards DDR shared by many others: ‘We will see if they [the implementer of the reintegration programme] can come and still furnish us with a printer and scanner and other stuff to let us establish our shop.’¹³ His example serves well to introduce some of the (f)actors that shape the reintegration programme in Torit and which are so crucial for the lives of many people.

Against all evidence, John keeps alive hopes for more support. He expresses his discontent with the current situation. He sees himself entitled to more. His reasoning is as follows. He fought for the SPLA for a long time and gave a part of his living quality (arm and leg) and therefore is a wounded hero. He fought for independence. The SPLA fought, in his opinion, for the independence of South Sudan and succeeded, and that makes the SPLA a winning army. During the war few people were paid, because there were just no resources.

The idea behind his hopes is that the SPLA will not forget its wounded heroes:

When we [fought for] this country, we did not fight for ourselves, we fought for our people. Not for our relatives. We fought for the people of

¹² Interview with John Ohide, 17 July, 2011.

¹³ Interview with John Ohide, 2 September, 2011.

southern Sudan and for those people who are not in Sudan here and we complete[d] 21 years. And now we don't get anything, what is the problem, because we want the government of southern Sudan to help us also. Let them give us land, let them [em]ploy us in vacancies. Because to respect what they told us, 'Go back to civilian life', we accept[ed]. Then they g[a]ve us the different courses, we also accept[ed]. What they told us, we all completed. Now, we are also with them, [and we want to be employed] or to [lend] from them some money so we can [...] start our business.¹⁴

He sees the government of South Sudan as obliged to reward the ex-combatants. The SPLA is the army of a new country, and that entitles him, an ex-fighter, to receive regular rent or salary or a sustainable way of getting (back) to civilian life (e.g., through a loan).

John's ideas about what he is supposed to receive is pretty much what is written in the report of the UN Secretary General (UNSC 2000), the CPA, and the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (UNDDR 2006), which are quoted in a guidance note to the implementing partners, in this case GIZIS. This guidance note was sent as a draft on 15 November 2010. However, the contract between UNDP and GIZIS was signed before that and did not include all these ideas. It was therefore difficult for the implementing partners to change and adapt a programme already on its course.

Confusion among Politicians

This idea of remuneration and of a decent reintegration is shared on all levels, including politicians. Nartisio Loluke, the vice governor of Eastern Equatoria, commented on the topic of printers and scanners which should, in his view, have been distributed to ex-combatants. During a monthly meeting between the government of Eastern Equatoria, the GIZIS and locally active NGOs, he directed the following statement regarding the DDR programme to GIZIS: 'You give them small laptops, but you don't give them a printer. This is like giving somebody a Kalashnikov but no ammunition.'¹⁵

¹⁴ Interview with John Ohide, 17 July, 2011.

¹⁵ Speech by Nartisio Loluke in Torit on 9 July, 2011; the sentence was transmitted to me through three friends independently.

Nobody with GIZIS in Torit had the illusion they could bring economic change to Torit but rather aimed at helping some active, motivated and skilled people improve their situation. I often heard this. The problem was not that the employees of GIZIS do not want to do better but rather that it was impossible to bring about real change in the short period of four months.

Expectations circulated anyhow. Ex-combatants heard weird stories from their former commanders, who themselves had no clue about the reintegration process in 2006 before it started and appear to have misconceived it as a kind of pension programme. The expectations are the consequence of a series of events, ideas, media information, agreements, and models which travelled at different speeds.

Future Prospects for DDR in South Sudan

In May 2011 the Small Arms Survey published a devastating report in which Lydia Stone (2011) pointed to possibilities that arose with the end of the CPA. 'Whatever the DDR programme's many failings, now that its *raison d'être* – the CPA – comes to a close, programme partners and donors have the chance to address the real objectives of DDR and design a new approach' (Stone 2011: 9).

The SPLA and the Republic of South Sudan (RoSS) on the one side and UNDP, with its new mission in the independent South Sudan, on the other put the DDR programme in a new situation. These actors used this new start to develop a new strategy. The strategy builds on closer cooperation between the South Sudan DDR Commission and UNDP and the first step was a physical one, as they now share two compounds, 30 meters from each other. The new policy is full of cooperation measures. The money which was formerly managed by the UN will still be managed by UNDP but now 'in close cooperation' with the South Sudan DDR Commission.

I will not lay out the complete new strategy but rather some interesting aspects of it. The model of DDR got adapted to a great extent and now not only resembles the Security Sector Reform or Transformation (SSR or SST) but became an integral part of that plan: 'DDR is therefore a key component for the implementation of a broader Security Sector Reform (SSR) process' (SSDDRC and UNDP 2011: 6-7). DDR is now a tool of SSR / SST and development. There-

fore, it has had to adapt its aims to the ones of SSR / SST and development. Another, less tacit, change had happened with DDR. It changed from being an independent programme with its own model and became a tool of SSR / SST, which itself is another model.

The aim of the new DDR is to adjust and improve the South Sudanese army, not necessarily to downsize it. The aim is to transform the army from an 'army at war' to a 'development army'. This means some soldiers will go through the process of DDR, while others will be recruited to change the composition of the army. International NGOs will be contracted to teach local contractors who will then implement the programme; ideally international actors will not be in contact with the beneficiaries of the programme.

In listening to the managers and leaders of the South Sudan DDR Commission and UNDP in Juba, it seemed that according to them this new DDR policy would turn the whole South Sudan into a functioning state in no time. Not surprisingly the new policy states exactly that: 'DDR is one of the key priorities of the South Sudan Development Plan (2011-2013)' (SSDDRC and UNDP 2011: 7). How this was going to work, how close SSR / SST, UNDP, and the South Sudan DDR Commission would really cooperate and how their work would correspond with the development plan remained uncertain.

Conclusion

The report of the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG 2000) created guidelines for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). But the implementation of DDR in [southern or] South Sudan was neither successfully adapted to the local context nor did it reflect the broad aim of stabilizing peace and ensuring reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. Further, there was barely an impact on local communities as also recognised by the UNDP in a final report in late 2012 saying: 'What is however clear is that the programme's contribution to helping communities deal with issues related to conflict, insecurity and arms proliferation, all of which have affected them in the past and continue to affect them now, has been minimal, if any' (Bhattacharjee, Abhijit, and Hassan Ali Gadkarim 2012: 31).

Already during the first phase (2005-2012) DDR shifted its face. The original aim of DDR to bring 'combatants back to civilian life in a

sustainable way' or phrased differently to convince 'people potentially dangerous for society to not be dangerous anymore' shifted completely to 'providing people that pose no threat to society with education' and not necessarily with jobs. Several actors with a mix of implicit intentions had altered the target group (combatants) and the aim (civilian life). Some side effects were the (re)construction of some schools and the creation of local jobs for people working for the implementing organizations. Therefore, demilitarisation under this programme was therefore not happening.

The SPLA viewed DDR as a means to implement some of its tacit intentions and used DDR to get rid of unneeded but expensive possible wage earners by providing them with some training. It thus rather allowed the SPLA to improve the financial efficiency of the military.

After the independence of South Sudan, conditions changed, DDR became a hot topic again. The army was ready to reform and willing to use the DDR programme to do that. The new target group were combatants judged as unfit to serve in a 'development army',¹⁶ whatever that may be. Although the new plan targeted actual soldiers, it was still supposed to contribute to the efficiency of the army.

In December 2013 a new major conflict arose in South Sudan and it is reasonable to assume that DDR processes have to start all over again. The new conflict has shown the high militarization of parts of the South Sudanese population, the split in the SPLA and low degree of cohesion of the SPLA. To recognise this will be a major challenge for the production of strategies for the new DDR in South Sudan.

The new guidelines of the Second Generation DDR Standards do this to some extent by focusing 'on activities [that] are programmed locally' (UNDPKO 2010: 3) instead of introduced as a template externally. But they also propose to shift 'away from military structures towards the larger communities that are affected by armed violence' (UNDPKO 2010: 3) and thereby ignore some of the lessons learned in the renewed conflict.

A new DDR programme in South Sudan will face the difficult situation of including concepts such as a 'development army' and 'community integration' and a vast amount of actors that will try to manipulate the programme according to their views, such as SPLA-

¹⁶ Interview with Anna Kima Hoth, South Sudan DDR Commission Deputy Chairperson, 8 September, 2011, Juba, South Sudan.

generals co-responsible for the low cohesion in the SPLA. In other words, the DDR programme will continue shifting its face in unpredictable ways, and a processual approach should be considered to avoid the repetition of the emergence of new ideas and standards as happened in 2006 which could not be applied in a programme that actually started in 2011. However, it is done, let us hope it will some day prevent the outbreak of large-scale violence and that it will bring about fewer illusions and less frustration than in the cases of Regina and John.

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This book explores the emergent character of social orders in Sudan and South Sudan. It provides vivid insights into multitudes of ordering practices and their complex negotiation. Recurring patterns of exclusion and ongoing struggles to reconfigure disadvantaged positions are investigated as are shifting borders, changing alliances and relationships with land and language. The book takes a careful and close look at institutional arrangements that shape everyday life in the Sudans, probing how social forms have persisted or changed. It proposes reading the post-colonial history of the Sudans as a continuous struggle to find institutional orders valid for all citizens. The separation of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 has not solved this dilemma. Exclusionary and exploitative practices endure and inhibit the rule of law, distributive justice, political participation and functioning infrastructure. Analyses of historical records and recent ethnographic data assembled here show that orders do not result directly from intended courses of action, planning and orchestration but from contingently emerging patterns. The studies included look beyond dominant elites caught in violent fights for powers, cycles of civil war and fragile peace agreements to explore a broad range of social formations, some of which may have the potential to glue people and things together in peaceful co-existence, while others give way to new violence.

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